The Character and Conduct of the Apostles considered as an Evidence of Christianity,

IN

EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR MDCCCXXVII.

AT THE

LECTURE

FOUNDED BY

THE LATE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M. A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

BY

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OXFORD,

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS FOR THE AUTHOR.

SOLD BY JOHN MURRAY, LONDON; AND J. PARKER, OXFORD.

1827.

TO

THE KING'S

MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIRE,

THE gracious condescension, which permits me to dedicate this Volume to your Majesty, is peculiarly gratifying to one, whose father was honoured, during his professional career, by the distinguished favour of our late revered sovereigns. I trust that nothing in this Work may be found unworthy of the learned body, before which the Discourses were delivered, still less of the exalted patronage under which they appear.

Should the Volume succeed in making any impression on the public mind, I am confident that I shall be humbly instrumental in promoting a cause, in which your Majesty feels the liveliest interest—the advancement of Christianity among your subjects.

I have the honour to be,

SIRE,

Your MAJESTY'S most dutiful subject,

and most humble and devoted servant,

HENRY HART MILMAN.

OXFORD,
May 28th, 1827.

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And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

LECTURE II.

1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

EXTRACT

FROM

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

——" I give and bequeath my Lands and " Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scho- " lars of the University of Oxford for ever, to " have and to hold all and singular the said " Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the in- " tents and purposes hereinafter mentioned; " that is to say, I will and appoint that the " Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford " for the time being shall take and receive all " the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and (after " all taxes, reparations, and necessary deduc- " tions made) that he pay all the remainder to " the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture " Sermons, to be established for ever in the said " University, and to be performed in the man- " ner following:

" I direct and appoint, that, upon the first " Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly

" chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by " no others, in the room adjoining to the Print-" ing-House, between the hours of ten in the " morning and two in the afternoon, to preach " eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year fol-" lowing, at St. Mary's in Oxford, between the " commencement of the last month in Lent " Term, and the end of the third week in Act " Term.

" Also I direct and appoint, that the eight " Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached " upon either of the following Subjects—to con-" firm and establish the Christian Faith, and to " confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the " divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon " the authority of the writings of the primitive " Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the pri-" mitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord " and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity " of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the " Christian Faith, as comprehended in the " Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

" Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight " Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always " printed, within two months after they are " preached, and one copy shall be given to the " Chancellor of the University, and one copy to " the Head of every College, and one copy to " the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one

LECTURE V.

1 Cor. xii. 10, 11.

To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

LECTURE VI.

1 Cor. i. 23.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

LECTURE VII.

MATTHEW x. 16.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

LECTURE VIII.

1 COR. xv. 19.

If in this world only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"copy to be put into the Bodleian Library; and "the expense of printing them shall be paid "out of the revenue of the Land or Estates "given for establishing the Divinity Lecture "Sermons; and the Preacher shall not be paid, "nor be entitled to the revenue, before they "are printed.

"Also I direct and appoint, that no person "shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lec-"ture Sermons, unless he hath taken the de-"gree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the "two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; "and that the same person shall never preach "the Divinity Lecture Sermons twice."

LECTURE I

ACTS i. 13, 14.

And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

HERE then were assembled in an obscure chamber, in a city the inhabitants of which were hated and despised by the generality of mankind, eleven men of humble birth, of sordid occupations, and of uncultivated minds; peasants, publicans, fishermen, with a few women, and the brethren of one, who had recently suffered an ignominious death as a public malefactor. The eventual consequence of this meeting has been a moral and religious revolution,

equally unprecedented in earlier, and unparalleled in later ages. The customs, the manners, the opinions, the laws and political institutions of vast nations; the whole system of public and private life, in the more enlightened parts of the world, have undergone a change more or less rapid, complete, and permanent. Ancient modes of religious worship have vanished from the face of the earth; a new code of morality has gradually incorporated itself into the civil polity and domestic relations of innumerable people; arts and letters, even war itself, have appeared to assume a new character, and to be directed on different principles. So entirely indeed has the whole framework of society been modified by the introduction of Christianity, that it is impossible to trace all its remote bearings upon the habits and character of mankind. The philosophic observer of the human race can discover no event in the whole course of its history so extensively influential, as the promulgation of that religion which was preached by the apostles of Christ.

Nor is this revolution less remarkable for the duration than the extent of its influence. Having survived for centuries, the religious belief of these men exists, as the established faith of all those nations, which are particularly distinguished for civilization of manners, or the culture of the understanding. Empires have risen and fallen, dynasties have flourished and sunk into oblivion; manners and opinions have undergone in other respects the most complete and universal change; commerce and arts and letters have migrated from one quarter to another: but amidst all the vicissitudes of human institutions, and the perpetual fluctuation of political affairs, Christianity retains its power, adapts itself to every state of society, and every form of government. It has resisted alike every foreign invasion, and every domestic insurrection against its authority.

Nor are the impediments over which it triumphed, or the hostility to which it has been perpetually exposed, to be lightly estimated. In all parts of the world the religion of Christ had to supersede and eradi-

cate from the minds of men an ancient and inveterate paganism, which was incorporated with every habit, and moulded up with every prejudice. When itself was at its weakest, through intestine discord, a new religion, singularly adapted to the passions of mankind, and to the state of society among the people with which it originated, was propagated by the violent excitement of those passions; and the fairest provinces of Christianity were wrested away by the irresistible invasion of the Mahometan. At a later period, a system of opinions, as flattering to the pride of the human intellect, and as indulgent to the sensuality of a more polished state of society, as the Mahometan doctrines to the habits and character of the predatory tribes of Arabia, recommended itself under the specious name of philosophy, so as to acquire an influence extensive, and far from completely counteracted, even within the pale of Christianity. Nevertheless succeeding generations and revolving ages have witnessed the irregular but continued progress of this religion; its losses in one

quarter have been amply repaid in others; regions, which at its first publication were either impenetrable forests or unwholesome morasses, inhabited by a few naked savages, are now populous kingdoms crowded with the temples of Christian worship; the most uncouth languages have become flexible to the enunciation of Christian doctrines; the Gospel has visited shores, not merely undiscovered by the adventurous cupidity of ancient commerce or conquest, but the existence of which had not occurred to the most daring imagination. The arrogant prayer of the heathen conqueror has been, as it were, fulfilled in favour of Christianity, a new world, when we look to the southern hemisphere, we might say new worlds have been discovered, and laid open to the triumphant banner of the Cross.

Nor must the intellectual character of individual believers be omitted in this consideration. Christianity has not merely rested on prescription and authority; it is not alone inculcated by education and maintained by law. It has endured the investigation of the most profound and subtle,

and extorted the homage, sometimes involuntary, of the most inquiring minds. Men who have been far beyond their own age, and have shaken off every prejudice, which embarrassed their philosophical speculations, have not merely recognised the truth of the established religion by the decency of outward conformity, but by the unsuspicious testimony of inward obedience to its laws, and practical faith in its promises. In short, wherever civilization is most perfect, knowledge most extended, reasoning most free, Christianity maintains its ground. Among the greatest discoverers in science, and the most acute reasoners on the common topics of life, it has reckoned many of the most eminent among its advocates, far the greater part among its believers.

Thus then, having surveyed the progress and the perpetuity of the Christian religion, look back upon that humble chamber, and that unpretending assembly, with which it originated. Compare its present extent and influence with its obscure beginning. Whence such disproportionate results from causes apparently so inadequate? The coun-

sels of a few poor, and almost illiterate men have changed the entire moral and religious system of the world; have maintained their authority over successive generations, and have controlled, with the excellence of their precepts, and satisfied with the reasonableness of their doctrines, the wisest and most enlightened of mankind. This extraordinary revolution, according to the Christian scheme, was effected through the direct, immediate, and visible interposition of the Divinity. These men were endowed with supernatural gifts and faculties; they were accompanied, wherever they went, with signs and wonders; they were actuated, guided, and inspired both in their oral and written language by the Holy Spirit: the whole, in short, was the declared purpose of the Almighty, who employed these men as his mediate instruments, not as his providence usually operates through secondary causes, which are regulated by general laws; but openly and decisively espoused their cause by incontestable, repeated, unprecedented infringements on the course of nature, impossible to less than

omnipotence, untraceable except to the unseen but all ruling Deity.

But if this view of the propagation of Christianity be incorrect, either 1st, these men were not the original teachers of the new faith; or, 2dly. if they were, they designed, commenced, and established the new religion with such casual assistance as they might obtain; or, 3dly, they were the slaves and creatures of circumstances, the undesigning agents in a revolution, the success of which was fortuitous, and dependant upon the favourable state of the world at the period in which they lived, for its origin, progress, and completion. If then it shall appear on the fairest principles of moral demonstration, that these men did in reality accomplish this acknowledged revolution; if they undertook the enterprise with the avowed design of carrying it through, and did in fact both commence and conduct it with success, while it is absolutely incredible that they should either design or commence it without well-grounded reliance on supernatural assistance, still less succeed without the actual possession

of miraculous powers: if, lastly, the circumstances of the world at that period, far from accounting for the origin and success of Christianity, were at least as adverse as favourable to its reception, the conclusion of the Christian appears inevitable. Either, in the words of Chrysostom, the miracles themselves must be believed, or the greater miracle, that the world was converted without miracles [a].

[a] Ὥστε ὅταν λέγωσι μὴ γενέσθαι σημεῖα, μειζόνως ἑαυτοὺς περιπείρουσι. τοῦτο γὰρ μέγιστον σημεῖον, τὸ χωρὶς σημείων τὴν οἰκουμένην προσδραμεῖν ἅπασαν, ὑπὸ δώδεκα πτωχῶν καὶ ἀγραμμάτων ἀνθρώπων ἁλιευθεῖσαν. Chrys. in Act. Hom. I.

Si vero per apostolos Christi, ut iis crederetur, resurrectionem et ascensionem prædicantibus Christi, etiam ista miracula facta esse non credunt, hoc nobis unum grande miraculum sufficit, quod iis terrarum orbis sine ullis miraculis credidit. *S. August. de Civ. Dei*, XXIV. 5.

S'il mondo si rivolse al Cristianesmo,
Diss' io, senza miracoli, quest' uno
E tal, che gl' altri non sono 'l centesmo.

Dante Parad. XXIV.

Que pouvoit avoir vu le monde pour se rendre si promptement à J. C? S'il a vu des miracles, Dieu s'est mêlé visiblement dans cet ouvrage; et s'il se pouvoit faire, qu'il n'en eût pas vu, ne seroit-ce pas un nouveau miracle plus grand et plus incroyable d'avoir converti le monde sans miracle, d'avoir fait entrer tant d'ignorants dans des mysteres si hauts; d'avoir inspiré à tant

To establish and illustrate this truth is the design of the following Lectures. Leaving apart the original Founder of the religion, I propose, to take up the apostles at the period of the crucifixion, and, insisting rather on the external evidence from the facts, though not entirely declining the internal from the doctrines, to investigate the origin of Christianity. I would inquire then, I. Whether we have satisfactory proofs that the apostles were the first teachers of Christianity? II. Whether it is in any manner credible, that such men so situated, should of their own accord have invented, or having invented, have disseminated with success, a new religion, more especially such a religion as that of the Gospel? For if it shall appear that they had neither the requisite talents nor education, and were alike incompetent to conceive, develope, or publish abroad such a creed; if their characters and their conduct were equally inconsistent with the end pro-

de savants une humble soumission, et d'avoir persuadé tant de choses incroyables à des incrédules? *Bossuet, Hist. Univ.*

posed; their characters deficient in most of the qualifications requisite for such an undertaking; their conduct, if they did not possess miraculous powers, indiscreet, injudicious, and irreconcileable with the common principles of human nature, we have no alternative but to acquiesce in their divine inspiration.

III. If they possessed certain advantages for the dissemination of Christianity, in what to the Christian appears the providential prearrangement of the world for its reception, I would inquire, whether the impediments which remained did not more than counterbalance, as far as the apostles are concerned, this predisposition of human affairs.

IV. As the apostles must have foreseen, and, according to their own account, did foresee, much of the difficulty which they had to encounter; if they could have no rational object in the attempt, as far as this world is concerned, adequate human motives are wanting as well as adequate human means. But in default of these, we are compelled to adopt the only satisfactory

solution for such conduct, and to receive the miracles as an integral and inseparable part of the apostolic history. But if the miracles are true in one single instance; if the arm of God once interfered; if the voice of God once spoke by the apostles, what awful consequences ensue to those who will not hear, or if they hear, will not believe; or if they do not avowedly disbelieve, disclaim with the practical infidelity of their lives, that religion, the truth of which their reason cannot disprove!

Now the existence and agency of the apostles in this great work, as well as the period at which it was commenced, rest on the testimony of constant tradition in the Christian church; and on a cotemporary document, purporting to have been written by a follower of St. Paul, and supported by evidence as complete and conclusive, as that of any historical record in existence.

I. Tradition, however an unfaithful or uncertain preserver of characters and events, is rarely an inventor. In other words, however actions may be misrepresented, facts distorted, exaggerated, mis-

stated: however in the lapse of ages the personal history of individuals may receive a false or romantic colouring, we may assume even these falsehoods as evidence to the actual existence of the persons whose lives are thus unfairly drawn. Excepting in fabulous times, and even then the fact is questionable, persons are never assigned to certain periods and countries in which they did not exist; more particularly when visible and permanent monuments subsist to perpetuate their memory. Did the world suddenly, at a period in which history had assumed a rigid cognizance over human affairs, and in which the public records were kept with scrupulous accuracy[c], begin to believe that men named Peter, John, and Paul lived and taught a new religion in various countries, where such men as Peter, John, and Paul were never heard of? Did societies date their institutions from the time of their appearance; continue to observe rites and ceremonies which they prescribed; consecrate places to their

[c] See Jenkyn, Reasonableness of Christianity, I. 298. Law's Theory, p. 187. and note.

memory; adopt books pretending to be written by their hands, without satisfactory proof of their existence? Did the early antagonists of the religion argue upon the acknowledged fact of their existence and instrumentality, when a confutation so summary and conclusive was ready to their hands? If indeed we doubt the existence of the apostles, it would be difficult to prove that of Cæsar or Mahomet.

II. The details of the early Christian history rest on the authority of a narrative called the Acts of the Apostles; a narrative which appears to want no evidence to its genuineness and authenticity which can be fairly demanded. Is it then possible that this book should be not merely erroneous, partial, or overcharged in some of its minute statements, but absolutely fictitious in all its primary and leading facts? I inquire into its external and internal marks of credibility, merely at present for the purpose of establishing the absolute impossibility, that it should be one uniform and elaborate fiction.

1. The authenticity of this book, and

the fact of its perpetual reception by the Christian church, have been traced with the same accuracy through the successive writings of the fathers, up to the apostolic age, as the other scriptures. It is expressly quoted or distinctly named by Irenæus[d], Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, in the second century, and still earlier by Clemens of Rome, Barnabas, and Ignatius. Chrysostom[e] informs us, that from the earliest period it was regularly read in the assemblies of the Christians from Easter to Pentecost. Irenæus[f], Clement, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius ascribe the work to Luke, a follower of Paul, who marks the events of which he was an eyewitness by a variation of the personal pronoun.

2. This narrative is supported, confirm-

[d] Iren. de Hær. I. 31. III. 12, 14, 19. Clemens Alex. Strom. 5. Tertullian. adv. Marc. V. 2. de Jej. c. 10. Clemens Rom. i. 42. Barn. comp. with Acts ii. 24. Ign. Epist. to Ephes. comp. with Acts xix. and xx. 17. See Lardner Cred. Paley Ev. vol. I. 202. Rosenmuller Præf. in Act. Kuinoel Prolegom.

[e] Hom. ὅτι Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων.

[f] Iren. III. 1. 13. 15. IV. 15. Tert. de Præsc. XXII. adv. Marc. IV. 3. Origen. Philocalia VII. Euseb. III. 25. and III. 4.

ed, and illustrated by a number of cotemporary documents, purporting to be the epistolary writings of the apostles. I shrink however from intruding upon ground already occupied by Paley, and, while I refer to his unanswerable volume, the *Horæ Paulinæ,* merely observe, that the accordance of separate accounts, which touch only incidentally and casually on the same topics, is the most unexceptionable test of historic truth. Hence, if the Acts of the Apostles were lost, the early events of Christian history would be proved sufficiently for my purpose from the epistles alone. Unless then all the churches were in collusion to receive as the apostolic writings addressed to themselves, the bold forgeries of a later date, my argument will remain unshaken.

III. Does there appear any discrepancy between the pagan accounts of the first appearance of Christianity, and the tradition of the church, or the Acts of the Apostles? The silence, as well as the imperfect intimation, to be gleaned from the Latin historians, strictly coincide with the Chris-

tian account. They furnish a strong negative evidence, that the new faith was not introduced in a manner less secret or obscure. Had the kingdom of heaven come *with observation*, it must have attracted the attention of pagan historians. Had *kings taken counsel* in favour of Christ, the annalists of the times would have entered diffusely into the subject. The reeds from the lake of Gennesareth might be woven into an ark for the infant religion, unperceived or unregarded beyond the immediate borders of the land; but the cedars of Lebanon could not be hewn into a temple for the Lord, without exciting the astonishment, or at least commanding the notice, of all the Roman empire. Hence, in strict accordance with the vulgar account, Christianity is mentioned for some time merely as a modification of the Jewish belief. Now if the pagan writers had been accurately informed, even on the leading tenets of Judaism, we might expect them to have detected the points of difference: but the extraordinary misrepresentations which occur in their accounts of the Jewish

religion and polity, whether in Tacitus, Strabo, Justin, or Dio Cassius[g], explain their ignorance as to the innovation produced by the new faith. Such writers were content with loose and inaccurate information on subjects beneath the majesty of Grecian or Roman eloquence. To a laborious investigator, or a diligent and faithful antiquarian, who would have endeavoured to ascertain the real tenets and laws of this extraordinary people, the Alexandrian translation of the scriptures must have been accessible. But it was probably rejected with contempt, as the fabulous[h] chronicle of a superstitious people, and as little known even by men of letters as the Zendavesta of the Persians, or the Puranas of the Indians among ourselves. But while this is the case, no single pagan historian near to the times—for it is not often remarked that there is no cotemporary history extant—is without some allusion, more or less distinct, to the increasing sect; and every allusion, either directly or

g Tac. Hist. b. V. Strabo XVI. Justin XXXVI. 2. Dio. XXXVII.

h Tradidit *arcano* quodcunque volumine Moses. *Juv.*

by implication, confirms the apostolic account. There are three Roman historians, Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius; the former affectedly brief, the two latter imperfect. It could not be expected that these writers should pause in their lofty narrative of the rise and fall of the imperial dynasties, and of the events which concerned the universal dominion of Rome, to notice every sectarian difference among a superstitious people. Unless then the Christians obtained notoriety, as disturbing the public peace, and coming into collision either with the laws or with the capricious tyranny of the emperor, they would remain in unregarded obscurity. They did give rise to popular disturbance in many places, being persecuted by the Jews in Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, and Thessalonica: but directly the same scene takes place in Rome, they are expelled the city, and then the first of these historians thinks them worthy of a brief and rapid notice [i]. They suffer dreadful

[i] Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit. *Suet. Claud.* The best commentary on

persecution under Nero, and the same historian again condescends to mention them, but apparently, as if their sufferings were of little more importance than [k] a police regulation of the market, and an ordinance which restrained the lower order of players. The same transaction, as tending to develope the sanguinary character of the emperor, extorts the memorable passage from

this passage which I have met with is the following, excepting of course one point: Quoniam prædicantes apostoli fidem Christi nullo in populo vehementius quam a Judæa gente sunt impugnati, haud dubium est eosdem, adversus Petrum, Romæ evangelium prædicantem, illudque indies magis inter Gentiles etiam propagantem, turbas sæpius concitasse, rursumque alios Christianæ religioni studentes, eisdem fortiter restitisse. Sicque invicem altercantibus assiduis concertationibus dissidentibus, quod Christi fidei occasione concitatæ sunt turbæ, Christo impulsore id factum esse Suetonius existimat; ratus nimirum, eos qui Christi fidem sectarentur ad id esse persuasos, quem et sub Pilato in crucem actum, ac post mortem rursus vivere ejus sectatores judicarent. *Baron. Ann. Eccles.*

[k] Interdictum ne quid in popinis cocti præter legumina et olera venderent, cum antea nullum non obsonii genus proponeretur; afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ; vetiti quadrigariorum lusus quibus inveterata licentia passim vagantibus fallere et furari per jocum jus erat. *Suet. Nero.*

Tacitus, of itself the most complete confirmation of the apostolic history; and the unhappy celebrity of their afflictions obtains the satiric notice of Juvenal[l]. The courtly Dio Cassius was still less likely to deviate into any details about the origin or character of so mean and plebeian a sect; but when this "atheistic faith" had intruded into the bosom of the imperial family, he gives a vague account of the transaction, it is difficult to say whether obscure from ignorance or intention[m]. In Pliny's letter we, as it were, see the Gallio of the Acts again on the tribunal. The same contemptuous testimony is borne to the inoffensive character of the people. The difference is, that the sect having by this time increased most rapidly, Gallio appears more calmly su-

[l] Juvenal Sat. I. 155.

[m] Κἂν τῷ αὐτῷ ἔτει ἄλλους τε πολλοὺς καὶ τὸν Φλάβιον Κλήμεντα ὑπατεύοντα, καίπερ ἀνεψιὸν ὄντα, καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ αὐτὴν συγγενῆ ἑαυτοῦ Φλαβίαν Δομιτίλλαν ἔχοντα, κατέσφαξεν ὁ Δομιτιανός. ἐπενέχθη δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἔγκλημα ἀθεότητος, ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ ἐδικάσθησαν. Dio LXVII. 14. Compare Euseb. III. 18. Bashage Hist. des Juifs, vol. VII. 304. Lardner, Heath. Test. art. *Dio.*

percilious; Pliny betrays the wounded pride of the Roman governor, who resents the inefficacy of his severe measures, under the assumed disdain of the philosopher [n].

IV. If the scattered information thus collected from profane historians harmonize so exactly with the traditionary and written accounts of the Christians, there appears an accordance still more precise and remarkable on those points which belong to heathen history, and which are incidentally mentioned in the Acts. This book necessarily abounds in allusions to public men, to places [o], to events, and to cus-

[n] Josephus is the only other historian who could have mentioned the Christians: his silence, if indeed he is silent, is easily accounted for; giving up the contested passage, he explicitly names John the Baptist and James the Just.

[o] An author who has taken the pains to examine minutely the geography of the Acts, writes thus; "Of the "numerous places named therein we find but seven "which are omitted by Strabo, the chief of the ancient "geographers that are come down to us. The rest are "described by him in exact agreement with the history "of the Acts. Of the seven omitted by him, five are "fully and clearly spoken of by other ancient authors. "There remain only two therefore, of which a doubt can "be admitted, whether they are mentioned by any of the

toms which prevailed in different nations at the time in which it is supposed to have been written. On these points it is correct to the most minute particular; wherever any apparent discrepancy occurs, it has been explained in a manner as curious as satisfactory; while there is just enough of this apparent discrepancy [p] to preclude the supposition of an artful and elaborate forgery. It may be asserted, I think, without hesitation, that however ingeniously some fictitious narratives have been fabricated, nevertheless some anachronism or local error, some mistated, misunderstood, or misrepresented fact, some mistake as to the habits of the people described, has invariably been

"ancient writers now extant. And of these two one was "a city that had been destroyed, and for that reason "probably neglected by the historians and geographers "that have reached our age." The two are the Fair Havens and Lasea, of which the former is probably the καλὴ ἀκτὴ of Stephanus, the latter, the Lasos of Pliny. *Biscoe on the Acts*, p. 383.

[p] See for instance the question about the *Proconsulate* of Sergius Paulus, in Lardner and Michaelis, or the ingenious and satisfactory manner in which the latter accounts for St. Paul's being ignorant that Ananias was the high priest.

detected. In this respect the Acts of the Apostles, as the author was more liable to error, affords even more conclusive evidence than the Gospels. The latter are only conversant about the habits, language, and laws of the Jewish people, and the forms of the Roman provincial government in Judæa. The Acts take a wider, and consequently more dangerous range for an impostor. We are introduced to historical personages, some of whom are distinctly drawn by pagan writers, to Festus [q], Felix, Agrippa, Gallio. We detect not the slightest incongruity in their offices, actions, or characters. We are placed in cities, better known than any other of the ancient world, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Rome: every locality, every custom, every opinion strictly coincides with our previous knowledge.

[q] E quibus Antonius Felix per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit, Drusilla, Cleopatra, et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta. *Tacit. Hist.* V. *And as he reasoned of temperance, righteousness, and the judgment to come, Felix trembled.* Acts xxiv. 25.

The rabbinical traditions confirm the remarkable characters of Gamaliel and Ananias. *See Biscoe.*

The forms of the Roman law[r], a subject not likely to be familiar with such writers, are accurately observed. To do justice however to this part of the subject would require a minute and copious induction, such as that of the indefatigable Lardner, or at least the skilful summary of Paley.

V. If this book, as it appears, was published during the lifetime of those who were cotemporary with the apostles, either Jews or Gentiles, converts or unbelievers, it was a direct appeal at once to the personal knowledge of eyewitnesses, and to the public records. The enemies of Christianity

[r] M. Huber remarque fort bien, qu'il paroît, par toutes les circonstances du jugement de Pilate, que toutes les régles du droit humain y furent exactement observées, et que cela peut nous convaincre de la vérité de cette histoire. Des gens du petit peuple parmi les Juifs, tels qu'étoient les Evangélistes, ne pouvoient pas être si bien instruits de cela ; et s'ils n'avoient vu la chose, ou s'ils ne l'avoient apprise de témoins oculaires, ils n'auroient jamais pu la raconter, comme ils ont fait, sans dire quelque chose qui se trouveroit contraire à l'usage des gouverneurs dans les provinces Romaines. *Le Clerc, Bibl. anc. et mod.* quoted by Jortin, Eccles. Hist. I. 50. The argument is still more conclusive from the frequent judicial proceedings which occur in the Acts.

were neither few nor inactive, but the Christians not merely defied these implacable antagonists to disprove the existence and agency of the apostles, they gave them dates, facts, and places, to guide their investigations and facilitate their own detection. They named the cities in which the apostles had founded churches, governors before whose tribunals they were led, prisons into which they were cast, converts which they made, infidels who resisted their arguments. They stated where they began, where they succeeded, where they failed. Now if it could have been argued that neither the memory of man, nor traditionary information, nor official documents preserved the slightest vestige of such transactions, would the Christians have dared to confront, or the heathens neglected to institute such an inquiry. Some of these events were not such as to obtain merely an ephemeral notoriety. The Jews must have had some permanent tradition about the appearance of the new sect. Whether the Gospel was publicly announced on a high festival immediately after the death of Jesus; whether

it gained ground in the city, whether any of its converts suffered death in its defence, whether any remarkable man, like Paul[s], embraced the faith, these facts must have been undeniable, or they would have been denied The appearance of Christianity at Ephesus, Antioch, Corinth, or Athens, the conversion of Sergius Paulus, Paul's arguing before the Areopagus, were not, according to his own phrase, *things done in a corner.* Even at a later period, when Trypho opposed, or when Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian wrote elaborate treatises against

[s] Paul himself appeals to the personal knowledge of Agrippa: *For the king knoweth of these things before whom also I speak freely, for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for the thing was not done in a corner.* Acts xxvi. 26.

Jortin observes well on the particularity of the apostolic writings: "A man of very ordinary abilities, who re-"lates various things, of which he has been an ear or an "eyewitness, is under no difficulty or pain; but a forger, "if he had the abilities of an angel, whose imagination "must supply him with materials, can never write in "such a manner; and if he has tolerable sense, will avoid "entering into such a minute detail, in which he must "perpetually expose his ignorance or dishonesty." *Eccl. Hist.* I. 50.

Christianity, if the Christian accounts had been questionable on these primary points, they would have perceived and seized their advantage[t]. These antichristian writings indeed have perished; but as we know that the Christian controversialists[u] did not find it necessary to obviate such objections, we may fairly conclude, that these leading facts of the apostolic history were attested by the consentient voice of pagan and Christian tradition.

VI. Nor is the internal evidence of style and manner of composition less conclusive. The style of the Acts not only bears a remarkable similarity with that of the Gospel professedly written by the same author, but differs from the other evangelic writers precisely in those points and to that degree, which might be expected, from what

[t] Lactantius affirms, that Hierocles, in his writings against the Christians, acknowledged the low and illiterate state of the apostles: " Præcipue tamen Paulum Petrumque " laceravit, cæterosque discipulos, tanquam fallaciæ semi- " natores, quos eosdem tamen rudes fuisse et indoctos " testatus est: nam quosdam eorum piscatorio artificio " fecisse quæstum." *Inst. Div.* V. 3.

[u] Justin, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril.

we collect of the education, life, and habits of the author.

VII. But it is in the mode of composition that forgery usually betrays itself. It is elaborately artificial, studious about the arrangement and disposition of the parts, is complete, methodical, and never loses sight of the manifest object at which it aims. As a composition, the book of the Acts [x] is singularly inartificial; it opens without pretension; is loose in the arrangement of its facts, passes over considerable periods of time; and from one subject to another; the writer leaves us to collect from the change of persons, whether he speaks as an eyewitness or from hearsay [y]. The end is unaccountably abrupt, and it is al-

[x] See Lardner, Supp. chap. VIII. sect. 9. Hist. of Apost. art. *St. Luke.* Michaelis by Marsh, vol. III. p. 328.

[y] Le Clerc, above mentioned, thinks that Luke breaks off the history of St. Peter, of whom he had said so much before, very abruptly in those words Acts xii. 17. *And he departed, and went to another place.* Nevertheless St. Luke afterwards drops St. Barnabas in like manner, chap. xv. 39. And in the end he will take his leave of the apostle Paul himself without much more ceremony. *Lardner, Hist. Apost.*

most impossible to [z] ascertain the precise object for which the work was written, for it passes from one apostle to another, and has obviously omitted many material facts: some which would have given dignity to the apostolic history, such as the foundation of the church in Edessa, Egypt, Babylon; others which would have tended to raise Paul in the estimation of the whole body, as suffering in an unprecedented manner; *Three times*, says St. Paul[a], *I suffered shipwreck*, Luke mentions once only. He has omitted many persecutions to which Paul distinctly alludes; he preserves a modest silence as to his own person; though as the attendant of the great apostle, it is scarcely probable but that he must have cooperated usefully in his labours, and participated in his perils.

The impartiality of the narrative is no less extraordinary than its artlessness.

[z] The conflicting opinions on this subject, as stated by Kuinoel, (Proleg. in Acta,) are ample evidence on this point.

[a] 2 Cor. xi. 25. Compare this whole passage with the Acts.

There is no chosen hero, no ostentatious display of magnanimity or devotion, no boast of self-sacrifice. The reader is left to form his own estimate of the characters from the circumstances related; differences of opinion, disputes, weaknesses, are neither disguised nor dissembled. If an undue degree of attention appear directed to St. Paul, it is because his actions were better known to his personal attendant. But Peter is not sacrificed, for he does not inform us, that at Antioch Paul [b] *withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.* The partisan of Paul would hardly have refrained from depressing Barnabas [c], and would not have passed so lightly over their remarkable contention. What could be the design of forging such a book? It is not a complete history of the first propagation of Christianity; it is not a panegyrical biography of any one of the early teachers; it is not a pompous display of their sufferings or their success; it is not a complete developement of their religion. If it had been worth

[b] Galat. ii. 11. [c] Acts xv. 39.

while to invent, the invention would have been more skilful, and more to the purpose; had the early Christians lied, they would have lied more splendidly. The greatness of the apostolic characters, the powers which they possessed, the rapidity with which they triumphed, would have been more prominently advanced; the romance would have been more strongly coloured; the miracles would not have been casually scattered about, but introduced in gradual succession, and rising artfully in their demands on our credulity; the adventures would have been selected either for their marvellous or impressive character. The forger would not have confined his wonderful tale to civilized countries; he would have followed Paul into Arabia, and through the mist of unknown and fabulous regions, magnified the imposing figure of the apostle. He would not have been outdone by the boldness of subsequent tradition; or rather, if the work had been compiled in a later period, he would have embodied the striking though extravagant fictions, which were propagated concerning the authors of the

faith in the second century[d]. But two points in particular make me conceive it impossible that the Acts should have been compiled later. I. The constant tradition of the church from the earliest times asserts that Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom. Would any compiler, whose object must have been to advance Christianity by deception, have declined following these apostles to the glorious consummation of their labours; refused them, as it were, their crown and palms, and neglected such an opportunity of confirming the faith by the testimony of their blood? II. If the Acts were compiled and published before the destruction of Jerusalem, multitudes who knew the facts must have been living; if subsequently, their silence concerning that event is inexplicable. The enemies of Christ are scattered over the earth; his murder awfully avenged; the guilty city

[d] Etenim si legas ea, quæ cæteri qui feruntur fuisse vicini temporibus apostolorum, literis prodiderunt, vel ut ab ipsis audita conspectaque, vel ab iis qui viderint accepta, videberis tibi fabulas, ut ita dixerim, legere, si conferas cum gravitate fideque hujus historiæ. *Erasm. in Act. Apost.*

razed; above all, the predictions of Jesus are fulfilled to the letter. The Christian writers deny themselves one word of triumph; they betray by no hint or allusion their knowledge of this event: they are too blind to perceive, or too generous to adduce this proof of the rejection of their adversaries. They describe Paul as dragged to prison, they forego the opportunity of claiming prophetic foreknowledge for him, by inserting in his address the slightest intimation of the imminent destruction. In short, their artful or prudential assumption of ignorance is so complete, that we must give them credit either for more than human self-denial, or convict them of the most inconceivable artfulness.

Unless then we receive the history in the Acts, we are reduced to this alternative. We must believe that every record of the origin and early propagation of Christianity has perished, and a document been substituted false, not merely in some of its details, but in its primary and leading facts; not merely in its marvellous, or, if you will, superstitious views, but in every single statement. Yet

that this document has been so dexterously forged as to harmonize with all sacred and profane tradition, with all the circumstances and events of the times, and with writings extant which purport to be the letters of the apostles; yet with all this skill and ability the record is at last incomplete, and deficient in many of those arguments in favour of the new religion, which, humanly speaking, the forger could scarcely have omitted. While with singular felicity all the internal marks of authenticity in style, diction, and arrangement are scrupulously preserved; while many of the speeches display, if invented, remarkable art and propriety; with all these proofs of consummate skill, there appears at last a simple narrative, which redounds by no means to the preeminent glory of the teachers, or places the new religion in a splendid or imposing light. Either the main outline of the Acts is true, or the Christians, with an ingratitude or an absence of party-feeling, equally incredible, dismissed into entire oblivion those through whose instrumentality they had been con-

verted. 'Proud of their obscurity, boastful of the meanness of their origin, they ascribed their religion to persons whose names and characters bore neither weight nor authority. They forged, or permitted a forgery to be imposed upon them, inconsistent with their own recollections and knowledge, and not commended by any peculiarly flattering or exalting adaptation to the excited state of their feelings. Even during the lifetime of some, who were mentioned by name, they received as true, and stamped with their authority, a book of which every page, every verse, every letter might be contradicted. They read in their public assemblies, what, if untrue, multitudes on the authority of their fathers, general tradition, or their own experience, must have known to be false. And all this to trace their ancestry to the fishing boat and the workshop, to fill up the roll of their spiritual genealogy, with peasants, publicans, and persecutors.

Thus then to the personal agency of the apostles in the first promulgation of Christianity, we have the accumulated evidence

of Christian tradition, supported by heathen; we have cotemporary history, we have public and existing documents written by their own hands; we have the tacit admission of their adversaries. I think therefore that I have a right to assume the main outline of the history, in the Acts of the Apostles, as unquestionable. But if the main outline, if the primary and leading facts, as they are related in the most inartificial and unguarded manner, be true, I conceive that the truth of the miracles must follow as a necessary consequence. The miracles are so essentially and inseparably identified with the history, that neither the general outline, nor scarcely a single detail in the transactions can be accounted for without them. It is a mass of effects with inadequate causes. In heathen historians, in Herodotus and Livy for instance, we may easily detach the marvellous from the narrative, in the apostolic history they must stand or fall together. Without confident trust in supernatural assistance, the apostles could not have undertaken the design of converting the world to Chris-

tianity; without the actual presence of supernatural agency, concerning which, if they deceived others, it was impossible themselves should be deceived, they could not have succeeded in their enterprise. Without miraculous powers, their mode of acting in each separate transaction is directly at issue with every precedent in human experience, extravagant beyond the excess of the wildest fanaticism, indiscrete, so as to render impossible the success of the most daring imposture. However madness is sometimes modified by craft; however men who commence by deluding others, end in deluding themselves; or by self-delusion are enabled to impart the contagion of their phrensy—such contradictions as appear in the character and conduct of the apostles, supposing them either impostors or fanatics, or the impostor mingled up with the fanatic, transcend the possible varieties of human inconsistency, and surpass every credible deviation from the common principles of human action.

Opening then the book of the Acts, I would take up the apostles, as they were

left in the history of the four Gospels; trace them from the obscure chamber in which they met, as far as the authentic scriptures will lead us; rigidly examine every probability, and endeavour to ascertain, whether it is possible that they should have been themselves deceived, or whether they were capable of deceiving others; whether the faith of Christ could have been established without the direct agency of God; whether without a sober and rational conviction of their divine mission, the apostles would have attempted the conversion of the world, or could have succeeded in the attempt?

I enter upon the subject with less diffidence in my own argumentative powers, because, even if this outwork of Christianity, through the incompetency of its defender, shall appear less impregnable than it is, I leave the rest of the citadel in its commanding dignity, and maintained by its recognised guardians. The other evidences of Christianity are not in the least committed by my temerity. The miracles of our Lord, the prophecies, the character of the Redeemer, remain, to convince, to awe, to con-

ciliate. Jesus and his apostles will still speak to the reason and the heart. At the same time all subjects connected with Christian evidence appear peculiarly appropriate to my present auditory. At that period of early manhood, when the flesh and the spirit hold their desperate, possibly decisive struggle; when on the determination the whole character of the future life, and consequently the immeasurable eternity, may depend; when the reason, unless effectually strengthened, too often gives way to the more acceptable doctrines preached by the passions; any argument which may, I will not say enforce conviction, but induce to sober and diligent investigation, may be of incalculable importance; incalculable as the terrors of hell, in its precipitate course to which the soul by God's grace may be arrested; incalculable as the joys of heaven, to which by the same gracious influence it may be excited and encouraged to press forward.

Even to those far more mature in Christian knowledge than the preacher himself, though such an investigation may not be wanting to instruct, or even to confirm, it

may nevertheless conduce to invigorate the Christian feeling, and expand the Christian affections. For as the true philosopher, while unfolding the mysteries of the material world, will perpetually bear in mind and suggest to his readers, the superintending providence of the one great Cause, so he that presumes to enlarge on the plan of the Almighty for the propagation of Christianity, will of necessity develope the wisdom of the Deity in the adaptation of its appointed means to the end proposed. And as the powers of divine grace will not merely be displayed in the external signs of miracles wrought, and enemies confounded, and multitudes converted, but in the actions also and language of the apostles, in their zeal and prudence, their devotion to their Redeemer, and their love to mankind; since we cannot believe the reality without feeling the excellence of such virtues, the more effectual eloquence of religious example will melt, as it were, insensibly into the character. So that even if the faith be neither enlightened nor confirmed, it may be won to shew forth more

abundantly its fruits, and taught, by the study of apostolic models, in what manner it is to work by love.

May the God of truth and love make it equally operative on our understandings and our hearts—that God to whom be ascribed all majesty, power, worship, and dominion, henceforth and for ever

LECTURE II.

1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.

I HAVE adduced evidence, I trust, sufficiently conclusive, that the apostles were the first teachers of Christianity, and that the Acts is a real and credible history, as far as its main outline and leading facts. I proceed to the more important question, how it came to pass, that these eleven men, with their followers, set themselves up as authors of a new religion, and persuaded so many converts to acquiesce in their claims, and submit to their authority? I would rigidly examine their character and conduct,

in order to ascertain how far they were qualified to undertake and conduct such an enterprise. But to form this estimate with correctness, we must divest ourselves of all that habitual veneration with which we have been accustomed to array their persons and sanctify their names. In the mind of the Christian, the apostles of Christ are associated with all that is bold and uncompromising, prompt in decision, vigorous in action, temperate yet firm, unshaken in their fixed resolutions, yet prudent and even pliant when circumstances required. These reverential opinions, however, formed on the general view of their characters, incapacitate us in some degree from a dispassionate judgment on the question proposed. Fairly to consider their situation, at the juncture to which our attention is directed, we should close the history of the Acts, obliterate every recollection of the miracles which they wrought, and take them up as eleven *unlearned and ignorant men*, without attainments or connection, selected from the lowest orders of society, who had for some time followed, and implicitly obeyed,

the dictates of a teacher, whose character and doctrines they understood but imperfectly. We must not behold in their persons the inspired and delegated missionaries of the Most High, men eloquent in every tongue under heaven, but the humble mechanic, the unlettered fisherman, the unpopular and odious publican; not consider them as men so intrepid as to confront alike the prefect on his throne, and the infuriated populace in the streets, but as pusillanimous and irresolute deserters of their cause, now at the lowest state of depression and despondency, on account of the ignominious death of him on whom all their hopes relied, and who had undergone without resistance the public execution of a common malefactor.

Nothing appears more certain, than that the apostles themselves considered the death of Jesus the annihilation of their hopes [a]. The recollection of his former powers could only aggravate the sense of their present destitution. *He saved others,*

[a] Compare Lardner, Serm. XXII. Kuinoel on Luke xxiv. 20, 21.

himself he cannot save[b], had been the bitter sarcasm of his enemies, the more bitter to their ears, because it appeared unanswerable. *We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel*[c], was the melancholy confession of total disappointment. The promise of the resurrection, by their own account, they had neither understood nor believed. When Jesus said, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again*[d], the disciples did not understand him. Some rumours of these prophecies seem to have crept abroad, sufficient to awaken the jealousy, and redouble the precautions of his enemies[e], but not enough to reassure the despondency of his disciples. The language of Mary Magdalene is that of affectionate solicitude, lest the body of her Master might be treated with irreverence: *Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away*[f]. Hence it is evident, that far from expecting the resurrection, it had not

[b] Mark xv. 31. [c] Luke xxiv. 21.
[d] John ii. 19. 22. Compare Mark ix. 32. Luke xviii. 34.
[e] See Matt. xxvii. 63 [f] John xx. 15.

entered her thoughts. When the first intelligence of the event reached the disciples, *their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*[g]. And St. John explicitly asserts, *that as yet they knew not the scripture, that he should rise again from the dead*[h]. It is true, that the Lord had foretold both his death and resurrection; the accomplishment of the melancholy part of the prediction might have been received as a security for the completion of the triumphant and glorious clause. But the apostles either originally misunderstood his language, and rejected its real meaning, as inconsistent with their national prejudices; or at all events their present consternation overpowered their faith. The immediate pressing calamity absorbed all other feelings; sorrow for the loss of their Master, disappointment, personal apprehension, combined to prevent their remembering, or, if they remembered, their placing a favourable construction on his ambiguous prophetic language. Their conduct is expli-

[g] Luke xxiv. 11. [h] John xx. 9.

cable on this principle, and this alone. Every act and word marks their complete consternation and despair. They are scattered *as sheep without a shepherd*, without leader, without plan, without object, without bond of union. Above all, their timidity in deserting, in one, the shame and disgrace of having denied the Lord, would naturally oppress their consciences, and instead of inducing them to court publicity, dismiss them to their usual avocations, with the painful conviction of their incapacity for any great undertaking. Their only requisite for the apostleship of a new religion, their affection for their Master, had failed. The beloved Teacher was left without defenders in the hall: when he was buffeted, no hand interposed; when they sought false witnesses against him, no one came forward to bear testimony to his innocence. The draught of vinegar was administered by the hand of a stranger; and it is not till his doom was sealed, and the wrath of his enemies satiated, that their attachment faintly revives: they venture timidly, separately, and without hope, to approach the

place consecrated to his remains, while even then, the pious office, which they are anxious to perform, proves indeed their affection, but acknowledges the frustration of all their hopes. The desire of embalming the body shews that they contemplated no change, except the usual process of human decay.

But with the life of Jesus, the religion likewise might appear to come to an end. As it depended upon his personal authority, and consisted in his personal preaching, at his departure the whole scheme was dissolved. If his followers should adhere to his purer morality, and observe his holy injunctions; if he should assume his rank, as a commissioned teacher and benefactor of the Jewish people, as a wise and acknowledged prophet, this was the utmost that could be expected. If the expiring cry of their Master, *It is finished*, reached the ears of his disciples, their interpretation doubtless was that of despair, as though it implied the termination of that mission, from which they had expected so much, the complete cessation of all the power and authority of

Jesus, which could not, as it appeared, arrest or avert the triumphant malice of his enemies. So far their pusillanimity is consistent, and their conduct precisely such as we might expect from men of their station and character, under such trying circumstances.

On a sudden, however, the disciples of Jesus appear assembled together; their views are entirely altered; their courage restored; their hopes revived. A new and unexpected religion is at once proclaimed; unprecedented honours are demanded for their crucified and forsaken Master. Jesus of Nazareth is no longer announced as a teacher inspired by Heaven, as the worker of miracles, the Messiah who was about to redeem Israel. The redemption is declared complete, the task of the Shiloh accomplished, and himself having risen from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now we must suppose that these men, who had so completely betrayed their own cause from apprehensions of personal danger; who had avowedly abandoned all their ambitious hopes, and acquiesced in the

frustration of their schemes, within a few days, and without apparent reason, determined upon turning this emergency to their own advantage, shook off with one consent all their timidity, and renewed at their own peril, and for some purpose of their own, a design which for some time they had given up as lost. Either this was the case, or the resurrection of Jesus produced this alteration in their views. That miraculous event, if unreal, they either invented, or believed without sufficient evidence. Their number and unanimity render both suppositions improbable, their situation and conduct still more so. The coolness and audacity which would induce them to invent, the fanaticism which would lead them to believe on inconclusive testimony, are equally irreconcileable with their characters and circumstances. That all with one accord should agree to adopt this extraordinary fact as the groundwork of their new plan; that there should be no difference of opinion, or if there were, that it should be overruled; that they should unanimously consent to maintain, not only the

fact itself, but the circumstantial evidence, by which the fact was to be attested; that neither jealousy, nor timidity, nor the hope of reward, if another should take the part of Judas, and turn informer, should have tempted them to the least deviation in their story; that they should be betrayed inadvertently into no contradiction, such as the vigilance of their enemies would doubtless have been sagacious and alert enough to detect, each of these difficulties swells the amount of improbability to an incalculable height.

On the other hand, that all should at once be seized by the simultaneous transport of enthusiasm; be deceived by the same unreal appearance, or permit their senses to be imposed upon by the same illusion: that all should imagine precisely at the same point of time, not once but repeatedly, the presence of their well-known Master: or, if the fraud or the delusion originated in one or two of the leaders, that the rest, with unanimous imbecility should coalesce in adopting the fraud, or believing the delusion on such questionable author-

ity,—on each of these suppositions the difficulties are equally insurmountable, and the incredibility of their conduct equally apparent. In the exasperated state of Jerusalem, which the determined persecution of Jesus clearly proves, exasperation which was not likely to be allayed by the revival of a sect, perhaps with more odious pretensions, which its adversaries had considered entirely crushed, no one will assert that the design of the apostles could be entertained without serious apprehensions of imminent personal danger. The Jews could not be expected to shew that disdainful mercy, attributed by the poet[i] to the murderers of Cæsar, who thought it beneath them, "having struck off the head, to hew "the limbs." The fury of the Jewish populace once excited, knew no bounds; and the contempt of human life with which the Romans put down every indication of popular tumult would afford them no reasonable hope of security. At all events, to minds preoccupied with terror, such despe-

[i] Shakspeare, Jul. Cæs.

rate calculations on possible impunity would by no means occur. The dreadful cries of *Crucify him, Crucify him*, were still ringing in their ears. And if the personal majesty and gentleness, the acknowledged blamelessness, the prophetic reputation, the fame of his miracles, had not secured their Master against cruel, remorseless, and sanguinary persecution; if the hold which he had evidently gained upon the public mind, when he entered the city in triumph among the hosannas of the people; and the mysterious sanctity with which the possibility of his being the Messiah environed him, had accelerated, rather than retarded the vengeance of his enemies, the only chance of escape, open to the apostles, was the contempt and obscurity into which they had fallen. The frequency with which Peter was charged with being an accomplice of Jesus, and the anxiety with which he repelled the charge, indicate that the disciples were exposed to danger; and immediately they excited public attention, they would naturally excite public hostility: their renewed advocacy of their Master's

cause would necessarily awaken the storm, which only slept because its fury had been satiated.

Let us however concede (a concession perfectly gratuitous) the possibility, that the extraordinary circumstances of that particular exigency, the crucifixion of Christ, had paralysed the ordinary tone of their minds, and checked for a time their devotion to their Teacher's service, but that the usual vigour of their characters, as they recovered from their sudden panic, rallied again; and that upon mature deliberation they worked up their reviving courage to the renewal of their abandoned scheme; that they began to recollect and put together the obscure intimations of Jesus about his resurrection, and determined to make this story the basis of their future pretensions; or, if the supposition be not too incredible, that they began to imagine the reality of that which obviously had been so slightly impressed upon their mind. On either of these suppositions, however extravagant, were these men in their corporate capacity, or individually, as far as

we can judge from their previous conduct, likely to devise such a scheme, as the promulgation of a new religion, or qualified even to commence such an undertaking with success?

I. It appears to me, that the manner in which the apostolic body was constituted, and the number of which it consisted, were not merely irreconcileable with the original conception of the plan, either of imposture or delusion, but singularly ill suited to the successful advancement of such a design. It is remarkable, that their first object appears to have been, to fill up their mystic number of twelve. Precisely at the period of their greatest consternation, or at least, when, if recovering from their panic, their minds must have been occupied with the momentous undertaking which they were about to commence, in a tranquil and orderly manner, they set about the completion of their number; though the treachery of Judas, a subject by no means calculated to awaken agreeable emotions, or encourage an open and confiding intercourse, must necessarily be introduced. The whole trans-

action bears the appearance of a deliberate design, already conceived; and shews that they had begun to look further than any present change in their circumstances would warrant. Possibly the number might be intended artfully to fall in with the popular feelings, as answering to that of the twelve tribes; or the recollection of the Lord's promise, that *they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*[k], might mingle with their renewed aspirations after some temporal grandeur, of which, now that their courage was revived, they might not altogether despair. Still, either way, it is singular that their first object should not be their security, or the means of renewing the scheme with success; but, *one must be ordained with them to be a witness of the resurrection*[l]. Why another witness? the fact is not extraordinary, but the time is; and every individual admitted into their intimate fellowship, and within their most secret counsels, added another chance of treachery, or

k Matt. xix. 28. l Acts i. 22.

timidity, or rashness, or ill-timed and obstinate adherence to his opinions, which might be fatal to the whole design. For the equality of the infant republic bore within it the seeds of jealousy, mistrust, and rivalship; the collision of interests, the struggles of personal ambition, the desire of obtaining, the mortification at not having attained, preeminence; disputes about the appointment to the separate functions and offices; even (for we must admit the possibility of the most unworthy motives) about the division of the spoils, those universal passions, which are as ungovernable in the most narrow and ignoble sphere, as in the imperial court, or the factious democracy, might at any time betray the imposture, or split into hostile and irreconcileable parties the jealous and ambitious fanatics. That the apostles, if uncontrolled by the consciousness of superintending miraculous agency, *were of one mind*, is by no means the least inexplicable part of the history. Unity of purpose, unity of interest, unity of sentiment and opinion were indispensable; but was the coordinate au-

thority of a board of twelve likely to secure this improbable unanimity? was so complex and unwieldy a machine likely to work without perpetual jarring and dangerous collision? Still more, was it calculated for the complete organization of a new religion? For we must bear in mind (a subject to which I shall hereafter advert) that the apostles had not to preach a religion already defined, embodied in a single code, concentrated in one authorized volume, against which lay no appeal. The whole faith, doctrine as well as discipline, was without order or completeness; the great characteristic tenets of Christianity, the redemption, the atonement, the resurrection, the intercession of Christ, remained to be revealed, or at least had not been intelligibly announced. The creed of the apostles could consist only in the loose and scattered sayings of their departed Master; in moral truths neither systematically arranged nor distinctly developed; in parables not always intelligible in their scope and application; in prophetic speeches, the intent of which was avowedly obscure and

ambiguous; all these preserved by the precarious tenure of human memory, not committed to writing, and liable to all the variations which the different interests, opinions, or understandings of the several individuals might attach to their meaning. To illustrate this, suppose twelve men, taken from the midst of ourselves, of a similar station, and with the attainments usual in the class from which they are selected, and set them to form, not a new creed from these vague and precarious data, but to interpret, without assistance, the written volume of the Bible. Every probability, as well as every precedent, will induce us to expect the most conflicting, contradictory, and irreconcileable confusion of opinions. I will take upon me to assert, that the paramount and acknowledged authority of one influential leader would be absolutely necessary for the original developement, as well as for the successful conduct of a scheme, like that of propagating a new religion.

II. Does the previous conduct of the apostles, as we receive it on their own authority, justify us in anticipating this strict

subordination, this unusual harmony, or this patient submission of individual opinion to the suffrage of the majority? It appears indisputable from the Gospels, that before the resurrection, the seeds of mutual jealousy and mistrust subsisted among the twelve. Personal ambition mingled with their views of their Master's aggrandizement. *And he came to Capernaum, and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest*[m]. Again, *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*[n]*?* Again, *There came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. And when the ten heard of it, they*

[m] Mark ix. 33. [n] Matt. xviii. 1.

were moved with indignation against the brethren [o]. In the parallel passage in St. Mark's Gospel, the ambitious request is attributed to the apostles themselves, but the result is the same; *And when the ten heard of it they began to be much displeased with James and John* [p]. Even at the last passover there *was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest* [q].

Now is it credible that these feelings, hardly restrained by the authority of their Master's presence, when that presence was withdrawn, should be entirely suppressed [r]? When, if I may so speak, they began to play the game on their own account; when every measure was either to be dictated by

[o] Matt. xx. 20—24. [p] Mark x. 41.

[q] Luke xxii. 24.

[r] The apostles had been exceedingly subject, in the lifetime of Christ, to quarrelsomeness and contention about priority, and who should be the chiefest; yea, even at the very table of the Lord's last passover and supper. And therefore it hath its singular weight and significancy, and sheweth a peculiar fruit of Christ's breathing the Holy Ghost upon them, when it is related, that they now so sweetly and unanimously converse together, without emulation, discord, or comparisons. *Lightfoot on Acts* i. 4.

their leaders, or adopted by a numerical majority of opinions, is it conceivable, that a federal body, thus composed, should be inspired with such unprecedented unity, and act together with such admirable cordiality and good faith, in transactions which above all others appear to excite jealous and conflicting passions.

III. During the lifetime of our Saviour, the apostles appear dependent even to helplessness, avowedly ignorant, and restrained in a state of subservient humility, little likely to qualify them for taking a lead, or relying on their own decision upon the most momentous questions; for devising, in short, or executing such a scheme, as the conversion of the world. Their prejudices as Jews, their passions as men, their ignorance as low-born peasants, are perpetually betrayed in their misapprehensions of the design and character of the Redeemer. They misunderstand his doctrines[s], misapply his prophecies, are undecided as to his pretensions. Whenever they depart

[s] See John xvi. 18.

from their subordinate station, and presume to originate any thing, they are almost invariably in the wrong; fall into some national error, clash with the loftier views of their Teacher, and are repressed, sometimes with severity, sometimes with merciful compassion for their infirmities, always with the strong and commanding energy of one, too superior to admit advice, remonstrance, or suggestion. When they would call down fire from heaven, they are sternly rebuked[t]; when *they would not suffer little children to come unto him*[u], they are reproved; *Get thee behind me, Satan*[x], is the emphatic expression of our Lord to Peter on one occasion: *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken*[y], is his language to the whole assembly after his resurrection. Yet these same apostles, who, up to a certain period, are precisely the unlearned and ignorant men, the ἀγραμματεῖς καὶ ἰδιῶται, which they are described; men who appear summoned from humble

[t] Luke ix. 55. [u] Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16.
[x] Mark viii. 33. [y] Luke xxiv. 25.

stations to undertake an office, for which they are obviously and consciously incompetent, oppressed, indeed, with the sense of their incompetency; who are, like those that are suddenly called out of darkness into overpowering light, dazzled, perplexed, confused, and betray in every word and action their reverential astonishment at the unexpected novelty of their situation—yet these men, at the instant when their minds are unhinged by the unfavourable turn which their affairs have taken, suddenly deprived of their leader, depressed with sorrow for his loss, in manifest and acknowledged consternation, begin, nevertheless, to act for themselves with the utmost promptitude[z], boldness, and prudence; declare themselves the authorized preachers of a new religion; assume the burden and responsibility of converting the world; and not merely commence, but carry through this stupendous undertaking.

If then the body, both from its numbers,

[z] Compare, on the change of character in the apostles, South, vol. V. 30. Oxf. edit. and bishop Watson's sermon on "Christianity no Imposture."

and the manner in which it was constituted, from the danger of internal dissension, and the previous want of self-dependance, was ill calculated for the success of such a scheme, were those who appear to have taken the lead, characters so commanding as to entitle them to the uncontested post of eminence; and so authoritative, as to enforce implicit submission, or deference at least, to their determinations? Can we discover in one or more individuals the qualities requisite for the conception and conduct of the scheme, which were thus obviously deficient in the whole assembly? was it in fact a monarchy, under the form of a republic? were the rest mere subordinate accomplices in the fraud, or hurried away by the controlling fanaticism of a few ardent or artful leaders?

Not merely those who with Protestants of the highest distinction acknowledge in Peter a certain primacy[a], founded on preeminent zeal and ability, but even the candid member of the church of Rome[b]

[a] Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy.

[b] Though the promise of building the church upon

must admit, I conceive, that this primacy was not established in such decisive and unambiguous terms, before the death of Jesus, as to silence all possible jealousy, and preclude all contest. It must be remembered, that if his former zeal had entitled him to preeminence, his signal imbecility had in some degree endangered his claim. Nor, on the whole, tracing the life of Peter in the Gospels, and bearing in mind that one of the Gospels was unquestionably written by the author of the Acts of the Apostles, am I prepared for the tacit concession of the first place to him, far less for the prudent as well as resolute, the firm as well as vigorous, the conciliatory as well as daring conduct, which he displays in the subsequent history. Observe his ambitious claim of superiority[c], his presuming to rebuke his Master[d], his incautious violence in wounding the servant of the high

the rock had already been made, the charge, *Feed my sheep*, was subsequent to the resurrection.

[c] *Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.* Mark xiv. 29.

[d] Matt. xvi. 22.

priest, his boast of fidelity, his cowardly denial; on the whole, he appears a man of strong and ardent character, but liable to be hurried away by his vehemence, and checked by determined opposition; remarkably deficient in that intuitive self-command, which is never thrown off its guard by sudden emergency, which sees at once the course which is to be pursued, and adheres with unshaken resolution to the determination which it has formed. But if firmness and discretion appear wanting in the character of Peter[e], the mild and affectionate disposition of the disciple whom our Lord loved, however persuasive, and likely to control the better feelings of those whom he addressed, does not, especially if we estimate his character from the gentle

[e] Pro mitiori sane Joannis temperamento perorant tot judicia tenerrimi ejus erga Jesum amoris, qui innocua sua jucunditate optimum Sospitatorem nostrum ita occupavit, ut primum in familiaritate locum ei concesserit, eumque in sinum suum non solum corporis sui in accubitu, sed etiam animi recceperat.———Eodem quo erga Christum arsit amore, etiam fratres amplexum esse, suadet illa totiens totiensque scriptis, voce, vitâ inculcata Philadelphia. *Lampe in Johan.*

and contemplative[f] cast of his writings also, appear peculiarly suited for the daring and energetic course, with which the apostles commenced their undertaking. Such characters, however heroic in enduring, are rarely bold and comprehensive in the conception of their plans[g]; they will follow with the most enthusiastic fervour, and the most unshaken constancy, but they will not lead with irresistible energy, and fearless confidence in their own powers. The characters of the other apostles are less distinctly marked. James[h] the brother of

[f] The fathers were fond of contrasting the vigorous and active character of Peter with the more profound and speculative disposition of John. Theophylact calls one πρᾶξις and the other θεωρία, and explains himself thus: Σὺ δέ μοι· νόει Πέτρον μὲν τὸ πρακτικον καὶ θερμόν. Ἰωάννην δὲ τὸ θεωρητικὸν καὶ εὐφυὲς περὶ τὴν τῶν θείων γνῶσιν. in Luc. c. 25. Compare Casaubon. in Baron. Ann. Exerc. XIII.

[g] Compare Cave's Lives of the Apostles, Life of James the Great, for the various opinions of the meaning of the name βοανεργες.

[h] Origen declares his ignorance of the profession of all the apostles, excepting Peter and Andrew, James and John and Matthew. τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν οὐ μεμαθηκάμεν τὰ ἔργα, ὅθεν πρὸ τῆς μαθητείας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, περὶ ἐποιοῦν ἑαυτοῖς τὰς τρόφας. *Contra Cels.* I. 62.

John, appears to have suffered martyrdom in the cause of Christ. James the Less, if the same with James the Just, the bishop of Jerusalem, seems to have been admitted to a post of merited eminence[i]. Of Matthew we know little, except that he had to overcome the antipathy to his former odious profession as a publican; but the cool and cautious Thomas, surnamed Didymus, is marked out as one, little likely to be deluded by imposture, or to be transported either by his own or the imparted enthusiasm of others, into measures, of which the risk was great and apparent, the success remote and precarious.

Yet these were the men, who in the hardwrung intervals of lives of labour for their uncertain subsistence, or trusting to Providence for their daily provision; abandoning all their connections, their natural ties, their domestic duties[k], were to devote

[i] See Lightfoot on Matt. xviii. 17.

[k] Peter was married, Mark i. 50. Chrysostom observes, ὅπου πενθέρα, ἐκεὶ καὶ γύνη, ἐκεὶ γάμος. The whole passage, Hom. XXIV. on Is. vii. 1. is irreconcileable with the celibacy of the clergy.

themselves exclusively to the publication of a new religion [1]. They were to intrude themselves into the jealously protected province of the scribes, to give an entirely new interpretation of the national Scriptures; to be ready at once to turn every adverse

[1] Lardner (Hist. of Apost. c. 9.) and Kuinoel (Proleg. in Johan.) argue that Zebedee was in decent circumstances. Their arguments appear to me inconclusive, as *the hired servants*, Mark i. 20. might have been only temporary assistants; and it is very doubtful whether John was *that other disciple who was known to the high priest*, John xviii. 16. At all events, the trade of a fisherman was in the lowest estimation. Nota piscatorum paupertas, et proverbio dictus ἁλίεων βιός. Rosenmuller in Matt. iv. 18. A passage from Plautus well illustrates this:

Omnibus modis, qui pauperes sunt homines, miseri vivunt,
Præsertim quibus nec quæstus est, nec didicere artem ullam;
Necessitate quicquid est domi, id sat est habendum.
Nos jam de ornatu propemodum, ut locupletes simus, scitis,
Hisce hami, atque hæ arundines sunt nobis quæstu et cultu.
. . . .
Cibum captamus e mari, sin eventus non venit,
Neque quicquam captum est piscium, sobrii lautique pure
Domum redimus clanculum, dormimus incænati.

Rudens Act. ii. *S.* 1.

Compare also the Idyl. of Theocritus, entitled ἁλιεῦς, and Oppian. Hal. I. 35. Πατρὸς δὲ ἁλιέως πένητος· οὕτω πένητος, ὡς καὶ τοὺς παῖδας ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐργασίαν ἀγαγεῖν. ἴστε δὲ ἅπαντες ὅτι οὐδεὶς χειροτέχνης αἱρήσεται, τὸν υἱὸν ποιῆσαι τῆς τέχνης τῆς ἑαυτοῦ κληρονόμον, πλὴν εἰ μὴ σφόδρα καταναγκάζοι πενία. καὶ μάλιστα, ὅταν εὐτελὴς ἡ τέχνη ᾖ· ἁλιέων δὲ οὐδὲν πενέστερον οὐδὲ εὐτελέστερον. *Chrys. Hom.* I. *in Joan.*

text to their advantage, to new point every prophecy, and explain every type. They were to calculate so decisively on their own qualifications, as at once to proclaim their views, and commit themselves in the face of all the people as the twelve appointed servants of the long-expected, but rejected Messiah.

I demand then a cause for this moral miracle, equally extraordinary, equally inconsistent with the known principles of human nature, as the most stupendous prodigy with the laws of the material world. How have these men, collectively and individually, been thus, in an instant, transformed from timid, vacillating, jealous, ambitious followers, to intrepid, singleminded, harmonious, self-denying leaders? They appear thus suddenly to combine that most rare and difficult union of qualifications for a great undertaking, consummate courage and consummate prudence. Nearly the last words of Peter, which we read in the Gospels, are a denial of his Lord, a blasphemous denial; for according to one evangelist, *he began to curse*

and to swear, saying, I know not the man[m]. We open the Acts of the Apostles, and almost the first passage that occurs is a speech of Peter, distinguished alike for boldness and discretion, at once fervent and conciliatory; not without considerable oratorical skill in introducing, and at the same time softening the more offensive topics. Nor is Peter alone; all the rest appear to have supported him with equal courage and constancy; to have concurred in the same bold assertions; and defied alike the ungovernable eruption of popular fury, and the more tardy yet certain detection of their conspiracy by the regular government of the city. For the scheme which they thus unhesitatingly adopted in this interval of amazement and terror, the design which thus deceptively or madly they undertook, left them no alternative between triumph or death. Their first word, *The Lord has risen*, committed them for ever. They stand at issue with the whole Jewish people, probably with the Roman govern-

m Matt. xxvi. 74. Compare Sherlock, Sermon XVI. vol. II.

ment likewise. The scheme itself is the most desperate that could be imagined. Had they stolen the body, or had the body been removed by any means whatever, they provoked immediate investigation. Could it be produced, they would be covered with shame and ridicule, besides being punished as impious impostors. No retreat was open, no equivocation could avail, no subtlety extricate them, after they had once publicly announced the crucified, as the expected Messiah. They had put their hands to the plough, and could not look back; they were solemnly and deliberately pledged to the cause, and to each other, and they must either extort their security by making some extraordinary impression upon the public mind, by commanding awe and reverence, or they must expect to be swept away by the remorseless violence of the Jews or the judicial cruelty of the Romans.

But[a] the most extraordinary part of all is this, that the apostles entirely shift their ground, and announce a creed in direct

[a] See Locke, Reasonableness of Christianity.

opposition to their own acknowledged and doubtless openly avowed prejudices. Not merely does a total change take place in their characters, but in that of the religion which they profess. Up to this period, they unquestionably expected, that however obscured for a time, the splendour of the Messiah would at length break forth. Even after the resurrection, their thoughts, by their own account, were earthly, ambitious, Jewish. Their first question is, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel*[o]? The thrones of Judah, the glories of their nation, and their own consequent aggrandizement, start anew into their hearts with the first revival of hope.

[o] The dream of the earthly kingdom of the Messias did so possess their minds, (for they had sucked in this doctrine with their first milk,) that the mention of the most vile death of the Messias, repeated over and over again, did not at all drive it thence. The image of earthly pomp was fixed at the bottom of their hearts, and there it stuck; nor by any words of Christ could it as yet be rooted out; no, not when they saw the death of Christ, when together with that they saw his resurrection: for then they also asked, *Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* Acts i. 6. *Lightfoot on Matt.* xviii. 1. See also White's third Bampton Lecture.

All this is now at once discarded and disclaimed. It can scarcely be supposed, but that their ambitious and splendid prospects, the expectation of which could not be suppressed by the commanding presence of their Master, must have been openly announced, or at least incautiously betrayed in some of the public scenes in which they had been concerned; in the triumphant entry, for instance, into Jerusalem, or when Jesus vindicated the sanctity of the temple, by expelling the moneychangers. That they should dare then suddenly to turn round, and having avowedly proclaimed a triumphant, now as openly announce a crucified Messiah; that after the death of Christ had visibly filled them with amazement and despair, they should immediately assert his death to be a preordained and essential part of their religion, the great characteristic article of their creed, *him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*[p]:

[p] Acts ii. 23.

upon what principle can we account for this dauntless inconsistency, this flagrant tergiversation, the promptitude and decision with which they adopt almost instantaneously, and avow distinctly these new and dangerous opinions? How are they become thus enamoured with the abject and suffering part of their Master's character, attached not to the glories, but to the cross of Christ, proselytes to a creed, the rewards of which were remote and spiritual? How have they all at once detected their own misapprehensions of the prophetic intimations of the Messiah? having so recently construed them according to the popular prejudice, now invented or imagined the higher and more mysterious import of the same predictions? For clearly the redemption which they preached was directly opposite to that which they in common with all the nation anticipated? At this particular period, when depression, terror, and despair might have incapacitated them for sober calculation or connected reasoning, they have struck out at once the outline of a new,

connected, and consistent system of religious doctrines. Now as long as their hopes lasted, we can conceive their enthusiasm unsubdued; we can even understand how *they should hope against all hope.* When the cross was still before their eyes, and before the expiring cry of their Master had sounded upon their ears, it is possible to suppose that their rooted prejudices might withstand the shock; that they should expect some signal and immediate interposition. When the insulting exclamation was made, *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross*, they might have looked on in mute solicitude, still expecting their adversaries to be put to shame by the accomplishment of their disdainful demand. But when neither the insult of his enemies nor his own sufferings excited any intervention in his behalf; when he had manifestly given up the ghost, and the limbs had become rigid in death; when the prodigies which took place at the crucifixion, and which might have reawakened their hopes, had passed away; when the earth had ceased to shake, and the sun resumed its

splendour; when the unresisting body was carried to the sepulchre, the guard placed, the stone sealed, and still no change, no miraculous interference took place,—is it probable, is it explicable, is it possible that after all this, their enthusiasm should rekindle as it were from an opposite quarter: that it should perceive the manner, in which the apparent disappointment of their hopes might turn to their ultimate advantage, adapt itself with instantaneous pliancy to the change of circumstances, and build up as it were the fabric of a new religion from the ruins of the old? It is not the character of enthusiasm to start with one set of opinions, drop them in its course, and then seize with the same vehemence, and pursue with the same ardour, those which are in direct contradiction to its former ones. The fanatic spirit is always obstinate, having selected its object, it adheres to it with unshaken pertinacity, and disdains prudence, as implying want of confidence in divine protection.

Thus the time, the circumstances, their own previous characters, the nature of the

new religion, still more, the facts on which it was founded, if false, so easily detected, combine to heighten the inexplicability of this double change in the apostles and their creed. In whatever way we contemplate their characters, deceivers or dupes, we are at a loss to discover any rational grounds for their proceedings. It is impossible to conceive that the plan of imposing upon the Jews a crucified malefactor as their Messiah, could have entered into minds sufficiently sane to argue consecutively, or to harangue in public, without danger of being restrained as lunatics. In this total failure then of adequate causes for these obvious and undeniable effects, we are thrown back upon the extraordinary facts, of the appearance of Jesus after his crucifixion, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the primitive assembly of the Christians. The miracles are imperiously demanded, to make the history, I will not say, probable, but possible. Acknowledge that the same apostles who are self-described in the Gospels, preached the resurrection of Christ, as it is stated in the Acts, and how are we to avoid

the consequence? Whence is the intelligence necessary to invent this sublime part of our religion, or the boldness to attest it? Is this the language, are these the doctrines which these fishermen learnt when dragging their nets by the lake of Genesareth, and toiling for their miserable subsistence? Is this the prompt and decisive conduct of followers, who but a few days before were listening in awe and amazement to the mysterious teaching of their Master? who, were unable to stir a step, to utter a word, to risk an opinion, without his previous authority and sanction? Is this bold and unhesitating avowal of these dangerous truths that of men who were lurking about in places of concealment, only safe because despised, only unpersecuted because beneath persecution? Say that the apostles were deceivers; whence the moral courage, the unanimity, the self-reliance, the eagerness for publicity, the defiance of danger? Say that they were enthusiasts; whence the sober and rational tone of their arguments, their continued assertion of facts, the systematic regularity of their proceedings, the

combined energy of their operations? what in this case was the end and object of their design? Say that they were both; how came the deception not to be betrayed by the enthusiasm, the enthusiasm not to be quenched and extinguished by the consciousness of the deception? Desperate boldness! to risk all their possibility of success on the assertion of facts which might at once be contradicted! which depended entirely on the united fidelity of those to whom they had set so recent an example of pusillanimity! They declared that their whole body, that five hundred brethren at once, had seen the same Jesus, who had been crucified, alive. But reduce this number to the lowest; how could they presume to reckon on the faith and the intrepidity of the whole of their own body, and to venture their whole cause on the hazard that not one false, or weak, or undeluded brother would be found. That they persevered, that they advanced, that, partially at least, they triumphed, that even in Jerusalem, they persuaded multitudes to believe this fact, considering who and what they

were, is of itself decisive evidence of preternatural power. The Christian religion, the religion to which all the civilized world acceded, the religion of centuries, the religion of the most enlightened minds, was either the offspring of the apostles' invention or imagination during this period of horror, amazement, and despair, or it was the revelation of the almighty God. If then there is this moral impossibility that they should have invented it, or believed it, themselves, or induced others to believe it, without miraculous evidence, so far I conceive that the book of the Acts contains decisive testimony to the veracity of the miracles it records; that the character and conduct of the apostles affords incontestable proof of the truth of the religion.

The resurrection, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, being thus enforced upon our belief, may that Holy Spirit, which then appeared visibly, descend imperceptibly into our hearts, in order that by faith in the resurrection we also may rise again to the reward of sincere believers.

LECTURE III.

ACTS v. 38, 39.

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

SUPPOSING, then, that actuated by some unaccountable motive, and aiming at some inconceivable object, the apostles had deliberately determined on the scheme of converting the world to Christianity; let us inquire whether their conduct, immediately subsequent to the first public avowal of their purpose, was consistent either with discretion or the furtherance of their design, if they calculated and depended for their ultimate success on human means alone. All their passions are brought into subordination to this great and absorbing purpose; they no longer mistrust each other's timidity, or are endangered by mu-

tual jealousy; the great scheme of doctrine is distinctly laid down, and the whole body are solemnly pledged to devote even their lives to the advancement of their cause. Where, then, and in what manner, is it likely that the plan would be commenced by prudent men with well-calculated probabilities of success; or if the result of rash enthusiasm, where would that rashness have been most fatal to their design? Apparently in the heart of that city where the people would be most exasperated at the revival of the sect which they had supposed to have perished with its Founder; where there would be the greatest disinclination to believe, and the greatest solicitude to confute[a]; where the counter-proofs were in the power of their adversaries; where all the people, high and low, had been committed in the transaction, and to whom the preaching Christ not merely abased their

[a] Καὶ πρὸς τούτοις πάλιν, ἵνα μὴ λεγωσί τινες, ὅτι τοὺς γνωρίμους ἀφέντες, παρὰ τοῖς ξένοις ἦλθον κομπάσαι, τούτου χάριν παρ' αὐτοῖς πεφονευκόσι παρέχουσι τὰ τεκμήρια τῆς ἀναστάσεως, παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐσταυρωκόσι, τοῖς θάψασιν, ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ πόλει, ἐν ᾗ τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ παράνομον ἐτολμήθη, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἔξωθεν ἐπιστομισθῆναι ἅπαντας. Chrys. in Act.

national pride, but reproached them with most odious national cruelty. Such, however, is the scene selected for the publication of the new religion. Had a certain time been permitted to elapse; had the multitudes of Jews from all parts of the world[b], who were assembled in the metropolis on occasion of the course of festivals which commenced about the passover and terminated at pentecost, been allowed to disperse; had the excitement in the popular feeling been left to subside, and the malice of their enemies been lulled to sleep by security; had the rumour of the resurrection gradually crept abroad in Nazareth or the villages of Galilee, till the public mind was in some degree prepared; had the first appeal been made to the inhabitants of those parts in which our Lord had chiefly wrought his miracles—had all these cautious preliminaries been observed, the apostles might apparently have betrayed

[b] Lightfoot is of opinion that the prevalent belief in the immediate advent of the Messiah had attracted a more than ordinary number of worshippers to the metropolis. Compare Skelton, Deism Revealed, Dialogue V. Jenkyn I. 378.

some consciousness of mistrust in their supernatural commission, and consequently some suspicion attached to their proceedings. Yet even in Jerusalem, on a day of public festival, thronged as it was with Jews from all quarters, Peter, with the other apostles, stands forth, announces the commencement of the *last days*[c], and thus winds up a long discourse, in which he degrades the pride of the whole nation, David himself, far below that Being whom all the city had so recently seen hurried helpless and unresisting, buffeted and spit upon, to undergo the fate of a criminal at the place of public execution: *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*[d].

[c] Expone de judicio Dei in urbem Hierosolymitanam, totamque remp. Judaicam. Nam diem pro judicio poni alibi jam monuimus. Quum ergo tunc apud Judæos omnia ad ruinam inclinarent, nemoque ipsorum id negare posset, argumentum sane illud ex verbis prophetæ desumtum, tantam in animis ipsorum vim habebat, ut veritatem illius facile agnoscerent, victasque illi manus darent. Schoetgen, Horæ Heb. in loco. Compare Benson, First Preaching of Christianity, vol. I. p. 80.

[d] Acts ii. 36.

But in the next place, their continued residence in Jerusalem, with no power of impressing the public mind beyond that of persuasion; their perpetual collision with the constituted authorities; the impossibility of avoiding, or rather the imperious necessity of provoking, the jealous vigilance of their enemies, and inflaming with their continued and increasing prosperity the most malignant passions of their countrymen—all this evinces a reliance on the goodness of their cause entirely inexplicable on any supposition but that of its support from heaven. Jerusalem was not merely the most ill chosen place for the first assertion of the fact of the resurrection, if the fact were not true; but the prudence which selected it as the centre of their future operations appears equally questionable. If the first transport of enthusiasm, or the necessity of striking a bold and decisive blow at their outset, might encourage them to defy all hazard, and plant their standard, as it were, in the heart of the enemies' country; if their temporary security may be traced to the suddenness and

vigour of their proceedings; if they shall have stunned, as it were, their adversaries by their extraordinary daring—yet cooler deliberation, and the obvious effect, which they soon produced, of exciting anew the popular fury, would most likely induce them to withdraw to some more favourable scene for their intended operations. They continue, however, to harangue in public, to maintain their doctrines before the synagogues; not merely once, but repeatedly, they are called upon, at least through their spokesman Peter, to make a formal defence, to state and to confirm from the Scriptures the nature of their new doctrines; there is no attempt to escape, no dissimulation, no concealment.

In this respect their conduct is singularly contrasted with that of their Master; the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem were few, and at considerable intervals; he seems to have been fully aware that he was exposed to peculiar danger. Till *his hour was come* [c], therefore, he cautiously avoids that pub-

[c] Compare Locke, Reasonableness of Christianity.

licity, and collision with the ruling powers, which the apostles appear constantly and even wantonly to provoke. *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him*[f]. *Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews*[g]. This publicity therefore was not a lesson taught by the practice of their Master; for even in his last visit to Jerusalem, though *in the day time he was teaching in the temple, at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives*[h]. But with so much greater reason for apprehension, inasmuch as they had the awful proof of their Master's sufferings that the populace and the priests would scruple at no cruelty, and discountenance no fraud; would hesitate at no price to purchase information, and feel no shame at the exposure of those they might suborn—in defiance of all these dangers, the apostles resolutely fix their residence

[f] John vii. 1 [g] John xi. 53. [h] Luke xxi. 37.

in the centre of their deadly enemies; deliver, as it were, in their hearing the obnoxious doctrines, select the most perilous spot for their daring invasion on the religion of their ancestors. For, finally, if they should proclaim the redemption through Christ in Jerusalem, we should expect them to be discreet enough to find some remote quarter, where they might slowly work upon the more versatile or less prejudiced part of the people. But where do we see them? before the beautiful gate of the temple, choosing the presence of the priesthood, the Levites, the scribes, and the most zealous worshippers, whose devotion had led them to make a laborious journey from the most distant parts of the world; venturing even there to insult the ancient religion of Moses in its venerable sanctuary.

But is it possible that both the dangers and impediments of the apostles have been exaggerated in the preceding general description? When we come to particulars, do we find the circumstances of time and place, the state of Jerusalem, that of the priests and people, less unfavourable to such

men, preaching such doctrines in such a manner? Did the followers of Jesus, fortunately or artfully fall in with any inveterate and influential prejudices? had one of those remarkable revolutions of popular feeling, which sometimes occur, taken place subsequent to the death of Jesus, so as to encourage their attempt, remove their difficulties, and facilitate their progress? The latter supposition is rendered almost impossible by the shortness of the time which intervened; and the new part of the religion, which was first published by the apostles, was precisely that which would exasperate to the utmost their powerful adversaries. Their persons and their tenets were alike unacceptable, for they struck at the root of every national prejudice, offended every local feeling, ran counter to all the ambitious schemes, and crushed at once all the high-wrought expectations of their excited countrymen. To enter more into detail. I. The apostles had to combat the general prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem against their country. The Galilæans[i] were

[i] Paucis monendus est lector, Galilæos tunc propter

hated and despised as a turbulent, lawless, and ignorant people. This was intimated in the prophecy, *The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up*[k]. *Can there any thing good come out of Nazareth*[l]*?* was the language of Nathanael. It was objected to Nicodemus concerning Jesus, *Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*[m]. Their coarse dialect ensured their detection, and entailed contempt upon them. *Thou art a Galilæan*, and *thy speech bewrayeth thee*, implied, I conceive, not merely the detection of Peter, as a follower of Jesus, but a sarcasm likewise

'rusticitatem et simplicitatem famosos fuisse. Adeoque 'magis mirum id Judæis videbatur, quod tam rudes homines tanta virtute pollerent. *Schœtgen in Act.* II. 7.

Josephus thus describes the Galilæans; Νεωτέρων ἐπιθυμοῦντες ἀεὶ πραγμάτων, καὶ φύσει πρὸς μεταβολὰς ἐπιτηδείως ἔχοντες, καὶ στάσεσι χαίροντες. Vita, c. 17. See Kuinoel on Matt. xxvii. 15. on Luke xiii. 1.

k Matt. iv. 15, 16. l John i. 46.

m John vii. 52.

against his country [n]. The whole territory indeed was infamous on account of perpetual robberies and frequent insurrections. Pilate had not long before mingled the blood of Galilæans with their sacrifices [o]: and the remembrance of Judas the Galilæan, of his rash revolt and extermination, appears from the speech of Gamaliel to have been fresh and recent. New adventurers therefore from that unlucky country would encounter additional suspicion; on one hand, lest they should stir up the smothered embers of his rebellion; on the other, the people, having been once deceived from that quarter, would lend a less ready ear to what might prove a second, and no less fatal delusion [p].

[n] Galilæorum ergo lingua crassa fuit, barbara, impolita et rudis, literas distinctas confundens, voces diversas inconcinne jungens, vocibus peculiaribus in Judæa inusitatis utens, sicque dialecto ab Hierosolymitanis discrepabat, ut non mirum fuerit Petrum fuisse sermone suo proditum et pro Galilæo agnitum. *Buxtorf. Lex. Talm.* p. 436. Compare Pfeiffer de Dialect. Gal. Exerc. X. where some curious blunders, from the dissimilarity of pronunciation, are given. Michaelis by Marsh, I. 135. and Note on Lecture V.

[o] Luke xiii. 1.

[p] See Josephus, Bell. Jud. II. 8.

II. Certain of the most prominent and leading tenets of the Christians were singularly ill suited for the meridian of Jerusalem. Where would there be equal danger in proclaiming a doctrine so repugnant to their hopes as the dissolution of the temple [q]? It could not be denied or dissembled, that the teachers of Christianity spoke what would be considered by the jealous and irritable Jews as blasphemies against the holy of holies. The accusation against Stephen, if more formally made and supported by venal testimony, was equally applicable to the general tenor of the apostles' teaching; *This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the cus-*

q Our Saviour had so openly and expressly declared to his disciples the destruction of the temple, that they could by no means doubt of it, nor of the consequence of it, viz. that the ἔθη, customs or rites of the Mosaical law, as they are called, Acts vi. 14. and xxi. 21. were to cease with it. And this, St. Stephen, by what is laid to his charge, Acts vi. 13, 14. seems to have taught. *Locke on Ephesians, in init.*

toms which Moses delivered to us[r]. But we must be familiar with the Jewish writers and history, before we can fully appreciate the fanatic jealousy with which the inviolability of the temple was asserted. The authority of Herod, at the height of his power, could not induce the Jews to permit a golden eagle to be placed within its circuit[s]. Youths were allured by the promise of everlasting felicity to risk their lives in tearing the obnoxious emblem from the consecrated walls. However declamatory the speeches, assigned by [t]Philo and Josephus to those who appealed against the meditated profanation of Caligula, when he commanded his statue to be placed in the temple; such was the spirit of resistance displayed, that the Roman governor, at the risk of his own head, suspended the execution of the imperial mandate; and either the prudence or the pusillanimity of the

[r] Acts vi. 13, 14. [s] Josephus, B. J. 1. 33.

[t] Philo Legat. ad Caium. Josephus, Ant. XVIII. 8. Agrippa is said to have fainted away, when he heard the dreadful intelligence of Caligula's mandate. *Philo ut supra.*

tyrant acquiesced in the frustration of his design. The same bigoted jealousy, inducing the Jews to refuse the offerings of the Roman emperors, was the overt act of the last and fatal war [u].

But with their belief in the eternal local sanctity of Jerusalem, the perpetuity of the law and of the temple, was inseparably connected the expectation of the temporal Messiah. Till he came to glorify that second house, the house could not fall; he was to build up the literal, not a figurative Sion [x]. Nor has it, as far as I am aware, been sufficiently observed, how peculiarly adapted the recent circumstances of the Jewish nation were, to encourage the fatal illusion of an earthly conqueror, who was to restore the sceptre to Israel, and emancipate them from the tyranny of the Romans. The heroes of their later historical books were valiant warriors, who had successfully resisted foreign oppression; the splendour which had been displayed during the reign of the Asmonean princes, of Herod the Great in

[u] Josephus, B. J. II. 17.

[x] Compare Jortin's Disc. on Christ. Relig.

particular, had in all probability tended to elate the public mind, and to efface the impression of Pompey's irresistible invasion. And if the Herodians, mentioned in the Gospels, were more than political adherents to the fortunes of that house, their religious feelings probably anticipated some great revolution, which was to emancipate Judæa, under the guidance of that powerful family, and enable them to establish an independent, or rather victorious dynasty, of which Jerusalem should be the capital.

The later history of the Jews, which describes their last and desperate struggle for independence, displays during its whole course a fierceness, obstinacy, and indeed phrensy, which we can scarcely attribute to any principle but infuriated fanaticism. Though the subsequent oppressions of Pilate's successors maddened the people into perpetual insubordination; though this constant state of insurrectionary warfare rendered the national character more savage and merciless[y]; though in many respects

[y] If Josephus is to be believed, the morals of the Jews were in a deplorable state of depravity. Μήτε γένεαν ἐξ

their last resistance was rather that of a wild, lawless, and desperate banditti, than that of a nation manfully contesting for its liberties; the Jews were undoubtedly possessed to the end with the expectation of some signal revolution, to be wrought in their favour by the special intervention of their God [y]. No impostor had arisen who had not immediately found a host of bold

αἰῶνος γεγονέναι κακίας γονιμωτέραν. Bell. Jud. V. 10. Οἶμαι Ῥωμαίων βραδυνόντων ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀλιτηρίους, ἢ καταποθῆναι ἂν ὑπὸ χάσματος, ἢ κατακλυσθῆναι τὴν πόλιν ἢ τοὺς τῆς Σοδομηνῆς μεταλαβεῖν κεραυνούς. πολὺ γὰρ τῶν ταῦτα παθόντων ἤνεγκε γενεὰν ἀθεωτέραν. V. 13.

[y] Τὸ δὲ ἐπᾶραν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, ἦν χρησμὸς ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὑρημένος γράμμασιν, ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τις αὐτῶν ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης. Josephus, Bell. Jud. VI. 5. 4.

Atque hoc quidem (venturum Messiam) opinati sunt omnes, qui arma tum temporis adversus Romanos susceperunt. Licet multis ærumnis et laboribus obnoxii essent, nihilominus tamen semper spem suam in venturo Messia posuerunt. *Men. ben Israel, quoted by De Rossi Della vana aspettazione del Re Messia.*

Christi nomine populus Judaicus intelligebat vindicem libertatis. Nam illud, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ, descriptio est nominis Christi. Quare quicunque se missos divinitus liberatores populi Judaici dicebant, eo ipso Christos se profitebantur, et erant ψευδόχριστοι. *Grot. in Matt.* xxiv. 5.

and excited followers, ready for any rash or frantic enterprise. The history of Josephus [z] presents us with a continued succession of adventurers who struck this chord in the hearts of the people, which responded to the stroke, however harsh or violent. Thus then, there were bidders enough for the latent enthusiasm, and, while this was the case, it was extremely improbable that it should be drawn away from its natural channel, unless by those who should fall in with the current of popular opinion. But what was there in the character of Jesus, his apostles, or his religion, to command an interest in such a people? Certainly, in proportion to their anxiety for the revelation of the real Messiah, their jealousy would be excited against all pretenders to the character, especially if they ran counter to their own preconceived notions. If this was not the only cause of the hostility of the priesthood against Jesus, it was that which inflamed the fury of the populace. But in his crucifixion they had beheld what

[z] Josephus, B. J. II. 13. Compare Kidder on the Messias.

in their estimation disqualified him entirely for the character of the Deliverer. In the patient, the scourged, the mocked, the expiring Jesus, they beheld the confutation of his impious pretensions. Their success justified their cruelty; and he who could not by an instantaneous miracle come down from the cross, deserved to remain there in the agony which was his portion. Amongst a people, then, in this constant state of excitation, of course the heavier the tyranny oppressed the more eagerly anticipating the appointed Avenger and Deliverer, the apostles openly and continually declared, and rested their claim to the belief of their hearers on the truth of this declaration, that all these hopes were futile, all these anticipations groundless. They proclaimed the temporal Messiah to be a fond delusion; appropriated to their own crucified Teacher all the prophecies on which the Jews relied; distinctly asserted that the Shiloh had been sent and rejected, and thus at one blow annihilated the pride, the expectation, the ambition of Judæa. But not merely had their blindness rejected

the offered opportunity of redemption, and their carnal understandings misapprehended the spiritual meaning of their prophecies; not merely had they refused their homage, and withheld their allegiance from the Messiah; they had imprecated his blood upon their heads, and had actually put to death the promised Redeemer. Every sermon of the apostles was an awful rebuke against those *who had chosen a murderer, and slain the Lord of life.* They had not merely to reprove their natural blindness and obstinacy, but to impeach them as guilty of the most heinous national crime. If in all parts *Christ crucified* was *to the Jews a stumblingblock*, it would be so in an especial degree among those who had been accessary to his crucifixion, and in the city which was reeking with his blood. In the two speeches of Peter there is a curious difference; in the first, as if cautious of giving unnecessary offence, he speaks of Christ as one whom they had slain διὰ χειρῶν ἀνόμων, as it has been explained, *by the hands of those ignorant of the law;* thus casting on the Romans the more odious office of

actual execution. But in the subsequent discourse he is bolder, and the crime is directly charged upon the Jews; *Whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.* Such is the language of a low and illiterate Galilæan. But that the Jews, unless overawed by the visible display of miraculous power, should have listened to a speech so offensive; still further, should have permitted him to proceed to a regular defence of such doctrines, is to me little less incredible than the most stupendous infringement on the laws of nature. The history informs us that, previous to the former discourse, the gift of tongues, previous to the latter, the healing a well-known cripple in the name of Jesus Christ, had imperiously commanded the attention and enforced the awe of the people. That without some such safeguard, the apostles should have dared, or the hearers endured such an outrage on their feelings is absolutely inexplicable. Here again the mira-

cles are inseparable from the rest of the history, and we must suppose that the writer so fabricated his history, as to make the miracles thus an integral and essential part of it—a species of art totally at variance with his plan and system of composition, or that the whole is fictitious—a position, as we have already seen, absolutely untenable.

But if the general state of popular feeling was thus ill adapted for the progress of Christianity, the spirit of the predominant sects was, if possible, more adverse. Were the apostles to attempt a coalition with the Pharisee, with that class whom their Master had always addressed in the severest terms of reprobation; against whose leaven he had perpetually warned them, and in whose bosoms the resentful remembrance of his hostility must have long rankled? How was their humility to triumph over the self-sufficiency of spiritual pride, or the abasing doctrines of sin, atonement, and redemption through the sacrifice of Christ, to penetrate hearts, sheathed, as it were, in the obdurate armour of self-righteousness?

In fact, there was no want of adaptation in the existing religion to the different classes of the community. Judaism had gradually assumed forms suited to the dispositions of different believers. While the superstitious and the spiritually proud ranked themselves among the austere and censorious Pharisees, the more lax and voluptuous embraced the creed of the Sadducee; the ascetic and enthusiastic retreated into the desert with the Essene, while the fiercer fanatics threw themselves into the secret associations of the Zealots. Of these, the pharisaic class presented the most formidable barrier to the liberal, and at the same time humiliating influence of the new faith. Where religion is completely incorporated with the most minute details of life; where the most trifling actions of daily occurrence are severely regulated; where every hour is occupied by some duty, the neglect of which the scrupulous conscience considers a direct infringement of the divine law; where, however, this austere system of duty is compensated by the inward sense of its unquestioned meritoriousness, if duly dis-

charged; when the religious character, depending entirely on external acts of devotion, becomes a subject of calculation and certainty—from this inextricable bondage it is almost impossible to emancipate the soul. Thus governing the timid, the scrupulous, the superstitious, through their fears; the austere, the bigoted, the sanctimonious, through their pride; thus occupying every avenue to their hearts and understandings, making the whole life an organized system of ceremonial obedience, we cannot wonder at the extensive influence they had thus secured: that the lower orders, ever reverentially disposed towards the appearance of sanctity, should, as Josephus[a] informs us, almost invariably have espoused their party, so that their influence, as we hear from the same authority, became formidable even to the rulers[b]. While then the Pharisee held the devouter multitude in this hopeless slavery, the Sadducee, by appealing to other passions, secured what may be called the freethinking

[a] Ant. XIII. 8. 6. [b] Ant. XVII. 3. 13. 23.

part of the community. But not merely would this sect be offended at the high tone of Christian morals, but the doctrine of the resurrection was calculated to excite at once their contempt and hatred. It is a singular fact, that the government was at this period in the hands of the Sadducees [c]. The apostles, therefore, when they preached the resurrection, not only excited the common Jewish hatred against their pretensions, but struck at the distinctive creed of the ruling priesthood, and provoked the malignity of men proverbial for the inflexible and sanguinary violence with which they exercised their judicial functions. It is almost superfluous to mention the other sect, the Essenes [d], as their secluded life

[c] Acts v. 17. seems to indicate that the high priesthood was then in the hands of the Sadducees; and Biscoe argues, in my opinion conclusively, that Annas, his sons, and Caiaphas were of this party. See Biscoe on Acts, vol. I. p. 111.

[d] Esseni autem παρωνύμοι ὁσιότητος a sanctitate nominati, κωμηδὸν οἰκοῦσι, τὰς πόλεις ἐκτρεπομένοι, vicatim habitant, urbes fugiunt. *Philo, Probus liber*, Gens sola, sine ulla fœmina, socia palmarum. Plin. lib. V. 17. A populorum frequentia separata; adeo ut non mirum sit, tantum esse de iis silentium in evangeliis, cum essent illi Hierosolymis

would prevent them from coming much into contact at this early period with the teachers of Christianity. Josephus, indeed, in his laboured panegyric on this sect, informs us that they had synagogues in most cities; but the silence of the Scriptures, as well as their modes and habits of life, appear to indicate that they were not numerous in Jerusalem. However that may be, their more than ordinary attachment to the name and law of Moses, their ascetic habits, their notions about marriage, and, in short, the monastic character of their institutions, would more than counterbalance that inclination to Christianity which their purer morals might have rendered probable. But another class of men had already begun to abound, to whom the Christians must have been peculiarly obnoxious; I mean the Zealots, whose rigid attachment to the law and to

peregrini et ignoti neque rabbinorum quispiam eorum Hebraice meminit, ante Zacuthium, scriptorem nuperum. A.D.1500. *Marsham*, *Can. Chr. Sæc.* ix. quoted in Lardner, of the Jewish sects. Compare Prideaux, Conn. part II. b. V. The number of the Essenes was about 4000 in Syria and Palestine. *Philo*, *Quod omnis probus liber*.

the temple was considered as authorizing every crime, and sanctioning every cruelty[e]. Ready as they were to cut off their enemies by private assassination or public massacre, it is extraordinary that the apostles should have escaped their blind and bigoted fury, long before their conspiracy against the life of Paul. And, indeed, had not the increasing oppression of the Romans, the frantic insults of Caligula, providentially diverted their wrath, we might have expected a persecution of the Christians which would scarcely have stopped short of extermination[f].

Here then were these Galilæans to contest with Pharisee and Sadducee, priest and people; exposed to the open persecution of the Jewish government, in danger from the

[e] See in Lardner ut supra, and Jortin, Disc. on Christian religion, a curious quotation from Philo on zealotism. The Sicarii of Josephus were of this class, Bell. Jud. VII. c. 8. §. 1. also Basnage, I. 17. Compare Acts xxi. 27—31. xxiii. 10—15.

[f] The opinion of Lardner that *the rest of the churches*, Acts ix. 31. is to be attributed to the complete engrossment of all public attention to the result of this contest with Caligula, appears rational and probable. Lardn. Cred. II. 12.

Roman authorities, unprotected against the authorized fury of the Zealot; with a religion which condemned all alike, too contemptuous of external observances for the Pharisee, too pure and rigid for the Sadducee, too practical for the Essene, they still fought their way to success, *added daily to the church such as should be saved*[g], and, in short, with unexampled rapidity, increased both in numbers and influence.

Was then their conduct so singularly discreet and cautious, that, having in some inconceivable manner secured a sort of extorted liberty of preaching their peculiar opinions, they afforded no opportunity for the misrepresentation of their adversaries; led all their lives, and conducted all their proceedings in so prudent and blameless a manner, that their vigilant enemies could find no occasion of impugning their motives, arraigning their conduct, or inflaming the popular prejudices against them?

But precisely at the period when, in all probability, the increasing prosperity of the Christians kept alive the jealous vigilance

[g] Acts ii. 47.

of their enemies, an occurrence took place, which not only laid them open to the animadversions of their avowed opponents, but was of a nature so alarming, as might have alienated the more weak and vacillating of their own followers. It is obvious, that all questionable transactions would be attended with the utmost peril; questionable, I mean, in the eyes of the world, and liable to the misconstruction of those who only watched an opportunity of shewing their malice with effect. Men in the situation of the apostles would be most exposed to the vulgar charge of sordid and interested views. They had abandoned, at least must have neglected, their own honest but lowly occupations, in order to become *teachers of men*. However, when the religion was established, the equitable principle, *that those who teach the gospel should live by the gospel*, might be unexceptionable, doubtless, the coarsest imputations of endeavouring to obtain subsistence by a less laborious occupation would be urged against those who thus usurped, in a manner, the office and emoluments of the Scribes. But the Gospel being preached,

according to the express commandment of Jesus, to the poor; and their apostasy from the national faith probably depriving such converts of many among their customary means of support, the wealthier proselytes were under an imperious necessity of providing for their maintenance. Such, moreover, was the influence of the apostles' teaching, that many of the more opulent threw their whole property into a common fund for these charitable purposes[h]. The apostles themselves appear at first to have superintended the distribution of this fund[i], but at an early period gave up the invidious office, avowedly lest it should interfere with more important duties, but probably also not without the design of thus clearly evincing their own disinterested views. Previous, however, to the appointment of separate administrators to this common property, the occurrence took place, to which I alluded as likely to exasperate the public mind abroad, and to alarm with its severity the timid converts within. A man

[h] See Paley, Mor. Philosophy, b. III. c. 5.

[i] Paley's Evidences, vol. I. p. 67. note.

named Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, were suddenly struck dead in the presence, and through the avowed instrumentality of the apostles. The ostensible reason of their death was a fraud upon the treasury of the rising sect. Now it can scarcely be supposed that so extraordinary an event—two persons of considerable property thus successively falling dead in the same place—could pass unnoticed, or escape the knowledge of the watchful enemies of Christianity. If—and we can scarcely conceive otherwise—the affair became public, investigation, or at least inquiry would ensue. Now if the fact was not in the strictest sense miraculous, and was not proved to be so, to the satisfaction, or to the silencing, at least, of all objectors, we can scarcely understand but that suspicions of the most dangerous nature would attach to the apostles. The acknowledged cause of their death, Peter having avowedly been to a certain degree accessary to the fact, even the rapidity[k]

[k] Judæi mortuos eodem die quo obierunt, sepelire solebant. Vid. Matt. ix. 23. Sir. XXXVIII. 17. et Levit. x. 1—5. *Kuinoel in loco.*

with which they were borne out to burial, though not altogether contrary to the usage of the country, presented an occasion to the malice of their numerous and powerful enemies either of denouncing them before the public tribunals, or of inflaming the minds of the populace against them. The plain and simple fact that the transaction did not operate to their disadvantage, implies a tacit acknowledgment on the part of their adversaries, that with every facility of detection they could not disprove the miracle. That it was not, is an involuntary admission that it could not be made a serious and effective charge against them; and why it could not, unless it was manifestly and incontestably providential, a miracle in the strictest sense, I am at a loss to conjecture[1].

[1] Since the above was written, I have found an opinion somewhat similar in Kuinoel. "Cæterum quod mortem "subitam Ananiæ et Sapphiræ attinet, mirum fortassis "etiam videri posset, a synedris de ea non institutam "fuisse quæstionem, sed disciplina publica Hierosolymis "satis perversa erat, et metuebant synedri, ne, si aposto-"los in jus vocarent, fama hujus rei latius per populum "dissiparetur coll. 4. 17. atque adeo ipsa rei cognitione

Even with the converts it may be doubted whether *the great fear which came upon the church, and upon as many as heard these things* [m], would not operate unfavourably. It seemed to demand, as an evidence of the new faith, a perfect disinterestedness of the heart, as well as of the conduct; an extinction of all selfish and covetous desires, to which few could entirely attain, and none, after such detection, would dare to pretend. It shewed that the embracing Christianity was a decisive step, after which retreat was impossible; it placed an image of terror on the vestibule of the new religion, likely rather to deter, than to allure the hesitating and timid across the threshold.

Nor can we suppose that such a transaction as the death of Ananias and Sapphira could elude observation on account of the obscurity of the Christian sect, or the contempt in which it was held. For that the apostles were at this period objects of notoriety and suspicion is distinctly proved

" dignitas et auctoritas apostolorum multo magis augere-
" tur." *In loco.*

[m] Acts v. 11.

by the subsequent history, which describes the first violent collision with the existing authorities. Maddened at their success, the government resorts to the usual means of suppressing dangerous opinions, violent persecution. The apostles are cast, with every appearance of anger and animosity, into prison. According to the account in the Acts, the next morning they appear again in the temple, unintimidated and unsubdued, declaring that their prison-doors had been opened by miraculous agency, persisting that they ought *to obey God rather than men*, and exalting anew that Jesus whom the Jews *had slain and hanged on a tree* [m]. But their contumacy, instead of irritating, as is usually the case, produces an effect directly opposite. Both the people and the priesthood are obviously confounded, and a most extraordinary revolution has now taken place in public opinion. The people so decidedly take their part, that when *the captains and officers* are sent to arrest them a second time, *they feared the*

[m] Acts v. 29, 30.

people, lest they should have been stoned[n]. But not merely is this change wrought in the versatile and inconstant multitude, the Sanhedrim, the offended, the baffled, the but now persecuting Sanhedrim, is seized with a sudden fit of tolerance. And when a wise and distinguished man, Gamaliel, advises more cautious and temperate measures, they unanimously acquiesce in his suggestions, abandon their sanguinary intentions, and endeavour to repress the hated sect by the milder language of remonstrance, admonition, and moderate legal punishment. But in what manner had this change been brought about? How came these very high priests, who had put Jesus to death, and begun to persecute the apostles, thus suddenly to beat a retreat, and admit the possibility of divine intervention? That they should allow that this may be *of God*, is a step to conviction which I cannot conceive to have been extorted, but, if I may so speak, by main force. Could it be the personal address and eloquence of these men,

[n] Acts v. 26.

which in every respect were contemptible? the nature of the doctrines, which, the more fully they were developed, clashed more rudely with their prejudices? audacious imposture, which abused the people with false miracles? miracles wrought in the midst of their bitterest enemies! contagious enthusiasm? which implied the total abandonment and extinction of all their former national feelings! To what shall we have recourse to account for this? We have one solution, and one only, that which the narrative itself affords, *that by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, and of the rest durst no man join himself to them. But the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them* [o].

Was then this security, however obtained,

[o] Acts v. 12—15.

the cause of the increasing courage and advancing prosperity of the new sect? Did the apostles, by the prophetic sagacity of daring minds, anticipate this unaccountable change? Did they, though desperately, yet, as the event proved, not unwisely, calculate on impunity? Whether their courage confounded, their art deceived, their discretion eluded the insidious or open malice of their adversaries, could they reasonably foresee all this, and form their plans accordingly? The chronology of the Acts rests on such uncertain data, that it is impossible to ascertain precisely how soon, but unquestionably after no long interval such calculations, if made, were proved erroneous. For such appears to have been the animosity of their opponents, that even the extraordinary circumstances detailed above could no longer restrain them; a violent and fatal persecution broke out. It was not indeed on one of the apostles on whom the vengeance fell, but on a man recently appointed to an office of credit and responsibility. But where the accessaries suffered, the principals could hardly hope to escape. At any

rate the event is worthy of our serious consideration. Without at present entering into the general question of the martyrdom of the early Christians as an evidence of their faith, the death of Stephen took place at a critical period. In the first place, he was a man of learning, not likely to have been deceived by imposture; he must have been daily witness to the miracles by which the apostles confirmed their doctrine, and must have had means of examining into the proofs of that greatest miracle of all, the resurrection; he himself is described as endowed with miraculous powers. Now, though it is not quite clear whether his stoning was a [p] legal or tumultuous proceeding, it is certain that no concession was made. It can hardly be doubted that he might have saved his life by a recantation; such a confutation would have been too fatal to the odious faith not to have been hailed with readiness, and purchased at any

[p] Certain of the legal forms appear to have been complied with, for he was dragged out of the city, and he must have been aware for what purpose; at all events it left him time to deliberate on his conduct.

price. Stephen adheres with resolute perseverance to his cause, and, in the agony of death, declares his conviction of the Lord's ascent into heaven: *Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* But, secondly, the manner in which he was abandoned to his fate, although the Christians had become a numerous and organized body, was a display of the principle of nonresistance, not likely to promote the interests of the community. Every other adventurer, every other sect, acting in accordance to the common feelings of mankind, has at least manfully endeavoured to rescue its followers from the hands of their enemies. The unhappy Christian is left alone, no hand is raised to protect him, no voice pleads in his behalf; like his Master abandoned, like his Master submitting to his destiny, like his Master praying for his enemies, the first martyr fell asleep in the Lord [q]. Thus di-

[q] I am tempted to transcribe a striking observation of Abbadie on the parallel between the death of Stephen and our Lord. "Etienne meurt en priant Dieu pour "ses ennemis, à l'exemple de Jesu Christ: mais Etienne "n'est point saisi de tristesse; et n'est ni angoissé ni

vulging rather too early to the converts of the apostles the bitter inheritance that awaited them, and the literal manner in which the mournful predictions of their Teacher were to be accomplished in their persons: thus displaying too evidently, that the desertion of each other in the hour of peril, the want of mutual support, grew directly out of their principles, and might be continually expected under similar circumstances.

Nor was Stephen, it appears, a solitary victim. *At that time* (the history continues) *there was a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles*[r]. The apostles alone, the pusillanimous apostles, who fled at the death of their Master, now remain firm; they alone confront the

"épouvanté; il ne s'écrie pas, 'Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, "pourquoi m'as-tu abandonné?' Celui qui décrit le do-"mestique si courageux, n'auroit-il point su faire un beau "portrait de la constance du Maitre, s'il s'étoit proposé "autre chose que de dire la vérité?" *Abbad. sur le Rel. Chret.* 2. p. 513.

[r] Acts viii. 1.

inveterate fury of their enemies. But being of course objects of the greatest hatred, what could induce them to display this desperate resolution, unless the consciousness of miraculous power, and rational confidence in Divine protection. Still further, what could secure them, and them alone, from the excited vengeance, but either the reverence of the people, which their undoubted miracles had extorted, or the awe with which they were beheld by the high priests themselves. Their security appears the hardwrung attestation, not of their innocence only, but also of their power; and I draw from thence the reluctant evidence of their deadliest enemies in favour of their miraculous powers, which if they really possessed, it is obstinate impiety to reject their doctrines.

Let us review the state of the argument. Before that temple which all true believers considered eternal; among the greatest concourse of the most devout worshippers; in the presence of the Scribes and priesthood; overlooked by the Roman soldiery in the fort Antonia; on one of the most celebrated

festivals of the nation, the apostles of Christ stand forth and proclaim their crucified Master to be the Messiah. *Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree*, exclaimed the unanimous sentiment of the Jewish people. "Your Messiah has hung upon a tree, by "your hands he has been suspended," rejoin the apostles, "and your salvation depends upon your belief in the divinity of "him who has thus died." "Anathema on "him who maintains the slightest deviation "from the dignity of the temple, or derogates from the eternal sufficiency of "the Law; who depreciates the forefathers, "Abraham, Moses, and David." Such was the hereditary creed of the whole people. "Abraham is dead, and Moses is dead, and "David is dead, Christ Jesus alone lives, "and for ever," was the assertion of Peter and John. "Woe to him," says the Pharisee, "who omits one jot or tittle of ceremonial obedience." *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, return the Christians, *and ye shall be saved.* "Irrational folly to suppose "that the soul survives the body, that the "grave shall yield up the dead!" so spake

the sarcastic voice of the Sadducee. "The "grave hath given up the buried Jesus, the "grave shall give up all flesh to judgment," reply the intrepid Christians. "Retire into "the solitary wilderness to prepare the con-"templative soul for union with God, fly "the society, shun every custom of man," is the doctrine of the Essene; *Use the world as not abusing it*, that of the Christian. "Death without mercy to him who impugns "in the slightest point the religion of Mo-"ses," cries the infuriated zealot. "We "are not only ready to live, but to die for "Christ," is the meek rejoinder of the apostles. They assume at the same time the power of life and death, but possessing this power, they do not exert it in self-defence. They submit to death; though death is before them, and on every side, they confront it without fear or hesitation. Already the blood of martyrs becomes the seed of the church; still converts crowd into their ranks, till even *the high priests and the captains doubt whereunto this would grow*. How far it grew, let the doctrine of the apostles, preached here in what was the most barba-

rous extremity of the earth, eighteen centuries after, declare. But how it grew, unless under the especial influence of God's grace, let those who reject the Gospel suggest some rational, plausible, or even possible theory. That it be not preached in vain, be our prayer[s].

[s] Hic Judæorum natio suum habuit concilium, sua comitia, sua sacra sanctissima, doctores plures et eruditissimos, academiam theologicam, astronomos peritissimos præcipue curriculi lunæ; licet in tricis controversiarum multa postulati loco ponerent, quæ ostendere nunquam valebant. Romanum hic erat præsidium, in arce Antonia, procurator Judææ cum suis, aula Herodum. Hic erant synagogæ Gentium, Alexandrinorum, Libertinorum, Cyrenæorum, Cilicum (Act. vi. 8. ubi conferatur Lightfootus in Horis.) Huc confluebant Judæi ex remotissimis terræ angulis ad festa majora, discendi gratia, ad siclos pendendos, ad urbem caput suæ nationis visendam. Quicquid igitur Hierosolymis publice gestum fuit, illud in luce orbis terrarum accidit, haud secus ac ea, quæ in foro vel æde cathedrali Londini, Vindobonæ, Parisiis, Constantinopoli, Petropolique geruntur. *Harembergius de Mir. Pentecostali.*

LECTURE IV.

ACTS xii. 24.

But the word of God grew and multiplied.

IT is remarkable, that the ambitious views of the first Christian teachers were distinctly proclaimed at the commencement of their undertaking. No less than the conversion of all nations to their creed is the declared object of these obscure and ignorant men [a]. The religion, while yet helpless in its cradle, and as it were struggling for life, announces itself as the future sovereign of the world. How their success is to be accomplished, they know not; they are as yet apparently unemancipated from their narrow and exclusive national preju-

[a] Having thus declared that the world is to be converted, they are embarrassed at every step. See the difficulties which are made at the reception of Cornelius into the church, Acts x. 1. and subsequently at the admission of the Gentiles without circumcision, Acts xv. *Compare Benson*, p. 223.

dices; still they set boldly forward with a confident presumption that they shall be led right, and provided with ample means of advancing their cause. Extravagant as their pretensions are, they avow them without the slightest doubt, scruple, or hesitation. The commission which they produce is this, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*[b]. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*[c]. Their progress is even more distinctly intimated by the prophetic assurance of their Master, *Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*[d]. But the more extensive the views, the greater the incredibility that they should have been entertained by the apostles without ground or warrant; or that such men should have imagined the possibility of success on a scale so vast and comprehensive. However imperfect their knowledge of the difficulties and dangers

[b] Mark xvi. 15. [c] Matt. xxviii. 19. [d] Acts i. 8.

which they must encounter; however their ignorance might in this respect be advantageous, by concealing the real impracticability of the scheme, that men of their situation and attainments, whose lives were every hour in peril, whose doctrines were in acknowledged opposition to all the ruling passions and opinions of mankind, should announce and resolutely undertake so magnificent a project, implies, if not a rational and well-grounded assurance of divine protection, an audacity of imposture, or a phrensy of enthusiasm, unparalleled in the annals of mankind. With fanatics their blindness is frequently their strength; they rush inconsiderately upon their object, or force their way with ignorant obstinacy to their appointed end. But with the apostles all seems cool and deliberate determination; having despatched their work in one quarter, they proceed to another; until they have fairly offered redemption in Christ to those, *to whom and to their children the promise was made*[e], they do not

[e] Acts ii. 39.

proceed to unfold their scheme more widely; but having allowed a reasonable time to their own countrymen, they develope their further plans regularly and systematically.

Grant, however, that to a certain degree encouraged by the success of their scheme in Jerusalem itself; either having deluded their numerous converts with inconceivable skill and ability, or having imparted extensively their own self-delusion, the apostles are tempted at length, by some apparently favourable opening, to extend their conquests, and embrace a wider field of proselytism. Did then Judæa offer a more promising scene for their operations than the metropolis? Was such a religion, emanating from Jerusalem, likely to be received with avidity, or at least without any strong prejudice to its disfavour in the adjacent provinces? Throughout the whole of Palestine, the teachers of Christianity would have to encounter the same impediments which at last proved too strong for them in the city itself; or national antipathies, which their residence in Jerusalem, and

their obvious preference of their own countrymen, would inflame to the highest. The whole of the surrounding districts were in a state of dangerous ferment[f]; those ill suppressed and turbulent passions, which at last broke out into general insurrection, would scarcely have been restrained by the feeble successors of Herod, unless both rulers and people had been coerced by the strong hand of Roman despotism. Every province was distracted with intestine divisions, and animated with jealousy and hatred against its neighbour. Life was held on a most precarious tenure; and such was the expectation on one part of some great approaching revolution, such the apprehension on the other, that personal distinction was inseparably connected with personal danger. Hatred was the common element of the Jewish tribes; but, while the obstacles which it would present to the progress of the apostles in other parts, would be the general insecurity and the danger of lawless violence, it would, as it were, man the

[f] Compare Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, lib. II. c. 1.

wall of partition between the Jew and the Samaritan with the most furious and irreconcileable hostility. To expect a coalition between these two parties, to conceive the possibility of inducing them to adopt a common creed, was an enterprise apparently so desperate, and so likely to ruin their cause in both quarters, that we cannot understand how the Christians should make the attempt, far less how they should succeed. The hatred of the Jews and Samaritans, which it is here unnecessary to trace to its origin, is unprecedented in history. The feuds of rival barbarous clans; the factions of the aristocratic and popular parties in the Greek republics; those of the Guelphs and Ghibellines in modern Italy, afford no parallel to the rancorous and deep-rooted animosity of these people[g]. The national honour, and the religion of

g Compare Prideaux, Conn. part I. book 3. Kuinoel on John iv. 9. Benson, Planting of Christianity, p. 150. *There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation: they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell amongst the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem.* Ecclesiasticus, l. 25, 26.

each party, seemed pledged to maintain it in unallayed and untempered bitterness. It was a duty as well as a passion, it was authorized and approved by God himself. The danger lest his religion should become unpopular at its first outset, as in any way connected with the detested Samaritans, seems to have been foreseen by Jesus; *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not*[h]. One of the bitterest accusations against our Lord was this, *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*[i]; as if one expression of scorn were tantamount to the other. We have another instance of this reciprocal feeling— Jesus wishes to enter a village in Samaria, *and they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.* The Jewish hostility immediately breaks out in the answer of the apostles, *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did*[k]? Now, however, suddenly emancipated from their rooted prejudices, these same apostles overleap at once the barrier, and go forth

[h] Matthew x. 5. [i] John viii. 48. [k] Luke ix. 54.

to offer to this detested people the same gracious promises of salvation. They are now no longer afraid that their persons or their religion should suffer by the infectious contact—for even the touch of a Samaritan was considered by the rigid Jew as legal pollution[l]; and, if any faith may be placed in rabbinical authority, while the Gentiles on certain terms were admitted to the privileges of Judaism, their more implacable animosity interdicted, under the most dreadful execration, the proselytism of a Samaritan[m]. This unprecedented liberality is an-

[l] "Et notant Hebræorum magistri, Judæos Samaritis, "Samaritas Judæis obviis proclamasse: noli attingere." *Rosenmuller in Matt.* xv. 2.

[m] "Et excommunicant Samaritas per arcanum nomi-"nis sacrosancti et per scripturam consignatam in tabu-"lis, et per anathema domus superioris et inferioris, ne "quis Israelitarum comedat cum Cuthæo. Dixerunt "enim, quicunque comedet cibum Samaritani, similis "est ei, qui edit carnem suillam: nec quisquam faciat "ex Samarita proselytum, neque habeant partem in re-"surrectione mortuorum, quia scriptum est, Ezr. iv. 3." *Non licet vobis ædificare domum Dei nostri nobiscum, neque in hoc sæculo neque in futuro.* Pirke, Rabbi Eliezer, quoted in Cellarius, Hist. Sam.

According to Epiphanius a Samaritan proselyte was recircumcised. See Basnage, Hist. des Juifs, l. VI. c. 7.

other, and not unimportant proof of the total revolution in the characters of the apostles. Their success in this difficult enterprise is no less extraordinary. Coming, as they or their precursor Philip did, from Jerusalem; being Galilæans, between whom and the Samaritans there were recent and additional causes[n] to inflame the common antipathy[o]; announcing a Galilæan Messiah, who had visited, not the rival temple in Gerizim, but that in Judæa; by what peculiar art did the teachers of Christianity so far reconcile the Samaritans to doctrines thus preached by Jews, as that *Samaria should receive the word of the Lord* without difficulty? If it be supposed, that the fact of Jesus having been rejected by the Jews would recommend him to their enemies; if

[n] See Joseph. Ant. XVIII. 2. 2. XX. 5. 1. and B. J. II. 12. 3.

[o] Father Simon mentions a curious instance of this antipathy. "The Jews were extremely superstitious "about the parchment on which the Scriptures were to "be written. The parchment must be very clean; nor "can it be prepared by an infidel or ethnick, but by a "Jew, and he neither an apostate or an heretick. The "Samaritan copies are altogether renounced by the Jews "as vile and impure." *Critical Enquiry*, page 7.

the great attraction of the new religion was its condemnation of the Israelites, as murderers of the Lord of life; we must also bear in mind, that the argument from the prophets would be ineffective or unintelligible to a people unacquainted with, or placing no faith in their predictions. Still further, if the more liberal spirit of the new creed, and its emancipation from the narrow and exclusive tenets of Judaism might advance its progress in Samaria, every step towards success in that quarter would make them retrograde in the other. Supposing that they had reconciled the Samaritans to their connection with Jerusalem, they had still the more difficult task of reconciling the Jewish proselytes to their intercourse with Samaria. Cuthim, or Samaritans, was long a reproachful appellation with which the unconverted Jews branded the Christians[p]; an appellation, doubtless,

p "For even to this day, a Cuthæan (that is, a Sama-"ritan) in their language is the most odious name among "them, and that which in the height of their anger, by "way of infamy and reproach, they bestow on those they "most hate and abominate. And by this they commonly

peculiarly odious to the Jewish converts; and, as all the later records of the church indicate the unconquerable Judaism, the insurmountable prejudices, the irreconcileable antipathies of this class of believers, the first step to the more liberal system must have been, beyond all others, obnoxious and offensive. If the admission of Gentile proselytes into the pale of the new faith was watched with a jealous eye, that of the more detested and despised Samaritans would be so in a still higher degree, especially being interdicted, as it appeared above, by an express prohibition. That the apostles then out of these incongruous materials should build a solid and unshaken church; that they should speak peace to these conflicting elements, clearly evinces that the power of their Master still dwelt within them. It affords the strongest presumptive evidence to the truth of this assertion, that when *Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them, the people with one accord gave*

" call us Christians, when they would express the bitter-
" est of their hatred against us." *Prideaux*, *Conn*. I. 3.

heed unto those things which Philip spake, seeing and hearing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city[q].

But among the difficulties which must have embarrassed the conductors of such a scheme, as the conversion of the world to Christianity, none could have been more perplexing; none would demand greater decision or greater prudence in deciding, than the association of coadjutors in their enterprise. In whatever light we consider the apostles, actuated by whatever human motive, this selection must have been equally delicate and hazardous. To be of real service their agents must be men of zeal and activity, yet that zeal and activity must be kept in strict subordination: the welfare of the whole community, and the success of the whole scheme, might be endangered by the indiscretion or misconduct, the self-willed opinionatedness, or the ungovernable

[q] Acts viii. 5. 8.

ambition of any single member, unquestionably of any acknowledged and accredited associate.

I. Blameless as the lives of the early Christians were, the sect *was every where spoken against:* but if any signal delinquency had occurred even in the lower orders, far more if among the leaders and apostles, the vigilant jealousy of their opponents would exaggerate the offence, perhaps to the permanent disadvantage of their cause. Of this the apostles must have been sensible; and they were in the singular predicament of being obliged to employ instruments, of whose fidelity and judgment they could have no satisfactory security, yet they and their cause were responsible for all the odium which might be incurred by the rashness, the folly, or even the moral infirmities of their teachers. They would even be implicated in the fortunes of those who, uncommissioned, assumed the title of Christian leaders. The Jews and the heathens were not likely to discriminate with impartial accuracy between those who were associated in their enterprise, and those rejected

from their society. Their disclaimer would not be heard, and all the indignation excited by the misconduct of these unwarranted intruders would ultimately fall on the originators of the scheme.

II. The more the religion spread, the more multiplied the teachers, and consequently the greater danger of diversity in the doctrines; jealousies would naturally arise; each would aspire to be the head of a party, and unquestionably, if absent or at a distance, possibly even when they were present, the apostolic authority would scarcely restrain that propensity of followers, either in enthusiasm or imposture, to outstrip their leaders, and to distinguish themselves by some innovation, or, as they consider it, improvement on the original design.

For, III. without commanding talents their coadjutors would be inefficient, but of commanding talents the original projectors would entertain serious apprehensions, lest the lead should be taken from them, their authority be superseded, and themselves thrown back into comparative obscurity.

Every human motive (and if they acted upon human motives, they could only prosper by imparting similar motives to others,) would be from its nature personal, selfish, jealous, and exclusive. The impostor would not bear to be outbid in his demands on the credulity of mankind; disputes, mutual accusations, and recriminations would be the necessary consequence of such struggles for superiority; and the secret would transpire through some sudden transport of wounded self-importance, or the deliberate treachery of invidious rivalship. But if all influential passions, whether of a more sordid or noble nature, the desire of gain or distinction, are cautious in encouraging rivals, and still more apprehensive of raising superiors, fanaticism is not less so. As its authority rests on its assumed divine inspiration, or at least its special mission from on high, as it identifies its own will with that of God, the slightest opposition is considered a direct attack upon the Majesty of Heaven; and, though anxious to increase the number of its adherents, as long as they will blindly and implicitly follow, if they attempt to

take the lead, considers itself, as it were, depreciated in the divine favour; and rather than admit what is not contained in its own revelations, will run any hazard, and resist with the most desperate obstinacy.

The apostles found themselves early called upon to exercise this dangerous privilege of examining and deciding on the conflicting claims of candidates for places of eminence in their new association; and their conduct in this respect is, as usual, inconsistent with every rule of worldly prudence, and unaccountable on any principle, except their rational reliance on supernatural guidance.

While they are in Samaria, they receive overtures of admission, not merely into the outward pale of their society by baptism, but into a participation in whatever privileges or superior powers were secured to the leaders, from a man whom it would be equally dangerous to receive or to reject. Simon Magus, as he is called, was a wonder-worker by profession, an adept in those arts which passed current as supernatural with

the ignorant, and indeed the educated multitude, for the belief in this sort of magic appears to have been almost universal both among Jews and heathens. This man had already gained great reputation, and established an extensive influence in Samaria. This is evident even from the concise manner in which the history is related in the Acts; for were we to refer to the early traditions of the Church, he would appear a much more important and influential character [r]. Absurd, and indeed impossible, as some of those fables are which are related of him whom [s]Beausobre terms the hero of religious romance, it is not likely that they should have been forged about an obscure antagonist. The manner in which his hos-

[r] Nam et Simon Samarites in Actis Apostolorum, redemptor Spiritus Sancti, posteaquam damnatus ab ipso cum pecunia sua in interitum, frustra flevit, conversus ad veritatis expugnationem, quasi pro solatio ultionis, &c. *Tertull. de Anim.* c. 34. Compare the second Clementine Homily; Justin Martyr, who asserts the exploded fable, that Simon was worshipped in Rome; Irenæus, I. 20. Euseb. Hist. II. 12. See bishop Chandler's Vindication, p. 390.

[s] Hist. du Manichéisme, I. 3.

tility to the early Church is exaggerated, appears to indicate that his opposition was of considerable importance. There appears indeed every reason to believe that he was a powerful and successful adversary of Christianity, the precursor of Manes, though not blending the gnostic or oriental opinions with the Gospel, but setting them up in opposition to the tenets of the apostles[t]. Simon evidently judged of the apostles by himself, and considered them in possession of some secret, which he wanted leisure or sagacity to penetrate. He took therefore the direct course of appealing to the passion by which such impostors are usually actuated, their desire of gain. The bold and decisive conduct of the apostles is a conclusive evidence of their belief in the reality of their own miracles. That they

[t] Ἀλλὰ λανθάνει τὸν Κέλσον, ὅτε οὐδαμῶς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὁμολογοῦσιν υἱὸν Θεοῦ Σιμωνιανοὶ, ἀλλὰ δυνάμιν Θεοῦ λέγουσι τὸν Σίμωνα, τερατευόμενοι περὶ αὐτοῦ τινα, οἰηθέντος ὅτι ἐὰν τὰ παραπλήσια προσποιήσηται. οἷς ἔδοξε προσπεποιῆσθαι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, δυνήσεται καὶ αὐτὸς παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοσοῦτον, ὅσον Ἰησοῦς τοῖς πολλοῖς. Orig. c. Cels. V. 62. Wolfius and Rosenmuller identify him with the Simon mentioned not very creditably by Josephus, Ant. XX. 7.

wrought wonders, either as skilful deceivers, or through supernatural agency, is not merely thus acknowledged by Simon, but by all their adversaries. They are commonly designated by the name of γόητες, or jugglers[u]: Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian, all admit their pretensions. Here then, if impostors, they had the power of securing in their interests a dangerous rival in their art; at all events, one, who from the knowledge which he already possessed, would be most likely to detect their proceedings and lay open their deceptions. They reject his advances, they defy his hostility, they do not deprecate his vengeance; not merely in temperate and conciliatory terms, but in language criminatory and exasperating, they disclaim all connection with him; thus turning an useful ally into an implacable enemy, thus throwing off with disdain one whom every thing concurred in designating as an important coadjutor but formidable opponent.

The only rational motive which can be

[u] Celsus apud Orig. I. See Bingham's Eccles. Antiq. I. 2.

suggested for so dangerous a measure is their dread of his superior energy and influence, and the apprehension that he would not long endure to keep his conduct and doctrines in due subordination. Peter, it may be urged, was jealous of his acknowledged preeminence, and therefore obstinately rejected every new candidate who could possibly compete with him for his ascendancy. It is incredible indeed, that this motive, however powerful, should predominate over the great risk incurred by provoking the hostility rather than securing the amity of Simon; but the incredibility is enhanced, when we consider the next distinguished claimant on the influence, the emolument, the fame, or whatever earthly object may have induced an insincere proselyte to embrace Christianity. No event has been discussed with greater acuteness than the conversion of St. Paul[x]. But even the conversion of Paul, judging from human motives, is scarcely more improbable

" [x] See lord Lyttleton's celebrated treatise on the Conversion of St. Paul.—Part of Chrysostom's Homily, Ὅτι Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων, contains some striking remarks.

than his reception into the apostolic body, even after any period of probation; and the cordial cooperation [y] of the rest with a man obviously of superior attainments, more ardent character, equal ambition, in short, as a rival for the supremacy more dangerous in every respect than him whom they rejected, on this view of the subject is perfectly unaccountable. If the apostles dreaded the difficulty of keeping Simon in subordination, how much greater apprehensions would they entertain of the well-known impetuosity of Paul; if they mistrusted the fidelity of the former, how much greater reason had they to be wary in forming a connection with their persecutor; if they apprehended dangerous consequences from the ambition of the Samaritan, or if Peter individually trembled for his preeminence, Paul was in every respect a more formidable rival. That in the first instance the Christians in Damascus should receive Paul into the brotherhood without communication

y The fact of this cordial union is evident from the account of what has sometimes been called the first council of Jerusalem. Acts xv.

with the apostles is far from likely; that the intelligence of his conversion would spread with the utmost rapidity is certain; and therefore they had time to interpose their authority, even if by some collusion with Ananias—a supposition the most incredible of all—the persecutor had forced his way into the society. The jealousy and apprehension, which the apostles still entertained, is evident in their unwillingness to receive him at his first visit to Jerusalem [z]; that this caution should have been overcome, when every circumstance tended more and more to develope the superiority and independence of his character, precludes the suspicion of their being influenced by jealousy for their own supreme authority, from which either as impostors or enthusiasts they could scarcely be exempt. Or, lastly, supposing that Paul, previous to his visit to Jerusalem, had formed a powerful party, which it was in vain to resist, and thus extorted an involuntary admission of his equality, how was the reconciliation so

[z] Acts ix. 26, 27.

complete as to stand the test of subsequent difference. In those remarkable collisions, first between Paul and Barnabas, secondly, when Paul *withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed*; when the Church was separated into the two distinct parties of the Judaizing and Grecian Christians, by what unaccountable prudence were all those discussions avoided, those mutual charges and recriminations eluded, which might have detected the whole design, or at all events prevented that amicable settlement which terminated in assigning a separate province to each of the leaders[a], making one the apostle of the Gentiles, the other of the circumcision? Would Peter, if influenced by human motives in the first developement of the design, and still subsequently in the transaction with Simon, have so far triumphed over his ambition, as to allow his primacy to be called in question; half his authority to be severed from him at a blow, by a man branded with the odious name of persecutor? Such modera-

[a] Galat ii. 7 9

tion in the later period is irreconcileable with the impetuous audacity of the former. Men do not become prudent from success, nor does the long possession of power induce the human mind to acquiesce in its loss without murmur or resistance. It is of itself extraordinary enough, that the design so precariously established should withstand the shock of such a collision between its leaders. That the shock was felt is evident from the Epistles of Paul, while the manner in which Peter in his own writings speaks of his *beloved brother*, and the apparent cordiality with which the other apostles[b] cooperate with Paul, claiming as he did a coordinate authority, indicate an unprecedented superiority to the usual passions of our nature.

But, in the calling of St. Paul, thus *out of time*, there appear certain indications of providential interference, almost tantamount to

[b] *It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Acts xv. 25, 26. Such is the language of the assembled apostles.

miraculous. Had Paul been among the original apostles, the infidel might, with some plausibility, have attributed the origination and early conduct of the design to a man of his vigorous mind and distinguished attainments [c]. But the design is far advanced by humbler agents before his assistance is required. The sect is so far prosperous, as to have spread beyond the bounds of Judæa; it is of sufficient importance to excite a violent persecution, and so firmly established in the minds of its followers, as to induce them to undergo voluntary martyrdom in its defence. Yet still its existence is so precarious, its success so improbable, its leaders so obscure, as by no means to offer a rational incentive to an ambitious mind to embrace its doctrines in the hope of obtaining emolument, distinction, or authority. Christianity had now no earthly rewards to offer, but that persecution of which Paul had been witness, and to which he had been accessary. How little likely it was permanently to prosper among his countrymen

[c] See Locke. Reasonableness of Christianity.

he knew by experience; its propagation among the Gentiles was a scheme as yet almost untried, and certainly affording no reasonable probabilities of success.

Let us then examine the circumstances of Paul's conversion, with a view to ascertain whether there is intrinsic evidence of its miraculous nature; evidence, I mean, that the miracle forms a part of the history, absolutely essential to the veracity of the whole. At the death of the first Christian martyr, a young man of uncorrupted Jewish lineage, *a Hebrew of the Hebrews*; well educated, but in the strongest prejudices of inveterate Judaism[d], in the school of the Pharisees; a zealous assertor of the Law of Moses, which he had observed with unimpeachable integrity[e], is remarked as conspicuous among the crowd of persecutors. It is conceivable indeed that the death of such a man, the intrepid courage with which in the hurry of a tumultuous execution he calmly declared that a vision of his Redeemer was presented to his eyes; the

[d] Galat. i. 14. [e] Philipp. iii. 6.

moral beauty of his prayer, for the forgiveness of God towards his enemies, uttered when his expiring breath was crushed from him by the overwhelming stones, these striking circumstances, might have favourably impressed the congenial disposition of Paul, and violently affected him towards those whom he had thought it his duty to persecute. No such effect however is produced; the hostility of Paul remains as violent as before, he urges personally the increasing persecution, is *exceedingly mad against them*[f], and takes out a commission to punish, wherever they may be found, these hated apostates. With this commission he sets forth, not unaccompanied by men, we may presume, of similar sentiments, towards Damascus, in the language of the Acts, *breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.* Thus manifestly inveterate in his prejudices, unshaken in his ardent attachment to the religion of Moses, the immutability and perpetuity of which he considered it treason-

f Acts xxvi. 11.

able and impious to question; with an austere sense of duty which proscribed mercy and precluded indulgence, fully authorized by the direct testimony of the Law, to exterminate all renegades from the faith of their forefathers. He set forth, doubtless with the applause of all his powerful party in Jerusalem, likely to attain the highest honour, advancement, even pecuniary reward, for his burning zeal and inflexible constancy in support of the national creed. He set forth apparently with no single circumstance which could induce him to change, and with every worldly and influential motive to attach him to his purpose [g]; with the still further guarantee of his impetuous and determined disposition against any weakness or versatility. He arrives at Damascus, blinded for a time, broken and humbled in spirit, and his first step is to associate himself with those whom he came to

[g] The Jews, or Ebiontes, have invented a strange story of Paul's being offended at not receiving the high priest's daughter in marriage; but, as Michaelis observes, "this "story is so absurd, that it carries with it its own confu-"tation." *Marsh's Michaelis*, IV. 180.

destroy, to embrace that religion which he had denounced as impious apostasy, to preach in the synagogues, that the despised and hated Christ *is the Son of God.* No objection is made on the part of the Christians; for it appears that one of their body, of those whom Paul came with the avowed purpose of destroying, under the influence, as he declares, of a vision, voluntarily seeks him out, restores his eyesight, and admits him at once into the Christian fraternity. Now, whatever the story with which Paul solicited admission, the imperious motive of personal security laid the Christians under a necessity of the most sober caution, and urged the strictest investigation before they would venture on so decisive a step. They must have known, and watched with apprehension, the object of Paul's journey. Even if superior to all revengeful feelings on account of their suffering brethren, they had every reason to suspect and guard against fraud. Their amazement, reluctance, and incredulity are betrayed at every step in the transaction. Ananias remonstrates, *Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much*

evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name[h]. Again, *All that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests*[i]*?* Nor would evidence be wanting, on which, whether voluntary or not, they could depend. From the conduct and language of Paul's companions, who far from deserting him, *led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus*[k], they could ascertain, to a certain point at least, the truth of his statements. These men would not be silent; for if they believed that a miracle had taken place, the nature and purport of which they obviously did not comprehend, they would have been too full of so extraordinary an event not to relate it publicly. If the miracle was doubtful, or to be accounted for on natural principles, they would probably have denounced the imbecility of their once forward confe-

[h] Acts ix. 13, 14. [i] Acts ix. 21.
[k] Acts ix. 8. xxii. 11.

derate, who was thus alarmed out of his religion, by weak and unwarranted apprehensions. Or, lastly, if no miraculous circumstance at all had taken place, they would have reproached him still more loudly for his causeless apostasy. Any important discrepancy between their story and that of Paul, would have alarmed the Christians, and enforced more strongly the utmost caution. The same motives would induce them to canvass the conduct of Ananias, and to examine into the possibility of treacherous collusion. The company in which Paul travelled forbids likewise the supposition, that he might have met some of the Christians on the way, whose persuasive eloquence might have represented the new doctrine in so favourable a light, as to shake the settled belief of the persecutor. For, besides the improbability of converting a man of Paul's vigorous and impetuous character, when he was solemnly pledged, and when his passions were enlisted on the other part, had any of the Christians had the desperate courage to approach him, some of those by whom he was attended would probably

have suspected, watched, and published abroad the intercourse which he was holding with the enemies of the Law.

As to Paul himself, he had every thing to lose, and nothing to gain by the change. The Jews were wealthy, the Christians poor; the Jews numerous, the Christians comparatively few; the Jews powerful, the Christians persecuted. Saul cut himself off at once from all his connections and friends; he frustrated [l] all the high hopes which his countrymen might have entertained from his character and acquirements; he became a man, if not self-exiled, yet one who could not shew his face in his customary place of residence without reproach, without danger. He drew upon himself the bitter hatred of all his Pharisaic brethren [m]; he exasperated his powerful patrons, the

[l] Paul, according to Selden, was already ordained an elder. Vitringa is of the same opinion: "Presbyteratus "autem dignitatem antedictam ab Gamaliele accepisse "Paulum, antequam Christo nomen dederat, non videtur "omnino dubitandum." *Selden de Syned. Vitringa de Synag. vet.* III. 1. 7. compare also Biscoe, p. 269.

[m] *For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*, Galat. i. 10.

high priests. For he added to his crime of apostasy that which would be construed into treachery to his employers. His life, as it soon appeared, and since a furious persecution was still actually raging, could not be safe for an instant. He had to lurk among mistrustful friends; to fly into foreign regions, to conceal himself from those on whose estimation he had built his hopes of distinction. In every point of view the measure was desperate. While he abandoned one party, he was not sure of a favourable reception with the other: he incurred the dangers of apostasy with no security of the reward—if indeed the scourge and the prison which awaited the Christian convert may be entitled reward. In his straight forward path lay peace, the respect of his compatriots, wealth, estimation; in the oblique road into which he struck, he had first to bend his spirit to hypocrisy and falsehood. He must impose on men, who either being impostors like himself would detect or hold off from him with the acuteness of jealous suspicion, or being honest but foolish enthusiasts, offered no very

brilliant alliance to a man eager for distinction, and unquestionably not wanting in sagacity and penetration. If the self-confidence of conscious ability already anticipated his forcible seizure of the post of eminence; if he contemplated no effectual resistance to his usurpation, would his prodigal courage have induced him to risk all his prospects upon this hazard? Had he joined the Christians before the persecution, he might have been unable or unwilling to recede; now it had become clear, that the post of eminence was that of peril; he must have known how many among his kindred would proudly perform that part at his execution, which he had filled at that of Stephen. Suppose that he contemplated from the first the throwing down the barrier between the Jews and Gentiles, and the extension of his own influence by the indiscriminate admission of proselytes from all quarters; the difficulty of such an enterprise, the opposition to be expected from the Judaizing Christians, the danger, that directly he attempted any innovation he would be denounced, disclaimed, and cast off, were

equally evident. Strange ambition! to quit the steady vessel, which was bound on its regular course to a rich and hospitable harbour, in order to spring on board a sinking bark, whose way lay through quicksands and breakers, in the hope that he might be permitted to seize the helm, and guide it to some coast which at last might be imaginary and Utopian.

So far on the supposition of Paul's insincerity. Could he be the victim of enthusiastic self-delusion? A singular theory has been suggested on this much canvassed topic by some of those, who, while they profess to believe Christianity, invalidate all the testimony on which Christian belief is founded. Paul, it is said, a man of disordered imagination, violently affected by the scenes of suffering which he had witnessed, and the fortitude with which these sufferings were endured, accidentally encounters on his journey a tremendous thunderstorm, in the natural effects of which his alarmed fancy beholds the terrors of his offended God, and forms its confused and reverberating sounds into the distinct and awful

remonstrance of the injured Jesus[n]. But, I. the assumption on which all this rests is not merely unwarranted, but, as we have seen, in direct opposition to the narrative. Paul, when he set out, was as much exasperated as ever against the Christians, and his only object at Damascus seems to have been the fulfilment of his persecuting commission. II. The several descriptions in the Acts bear no appearance of a thunderstorm. However rapid and sudden the atmospheric changes in those sultry climates, there must be some gathering of clouds, some preparatory darkness, some vehicle, if I may so speak, of the electric fluid, which must have induced the travellers to anticipate the great light, which, according to Paul's expression, *suddenly shone around them*. But if Paul could be so far abstracted in his own meditations, as not to perceive the change in the atmosphere till the flash deprived him at once of sight and of sense, those around him must have been sufficiently familiar with the appearance of a

[n] This notion is developed by Kuinoel with considerable elegance and perspicuity. *In loco.*

thunderstorm, to have informed him that the cause of his consternation was by no means miraculous. If the other terrific circumstances of a storm had accompanied this extraordinary light, they would have appeared no less the indications of divine wrath; and as the whole scene would have acted simultaneously on the guilty apprehension of the persecutor, that single fact would scarcely have been selected, and the rest of the awful circumstances, which alike proclaimed the offended Deity and justified his terror, studiously and perpetually suppressed. Indeed the expressions used by Luke, and Paul himself, on the three different occasions in which the occurrence is related, seem carefully to exclude any such supposition: *At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun*[o], ὑπὲρ τὴν λαμπρότητα τοῦ ἡλίου. Words which appear to intimate, that the sun was not previously obscured, but outshone by the more excessive brightness of the preternatural light.

The unbeliever will not admit as an ar-

[o] Acts xxvi. 13.

gument, but must consider a curious coincidence, the remarkable conformity of this transaction with the Jewish opinions of divine revelation. The light precisely corresponds with the Shechinah, or divine Presence, the voice with the Bath-col, the usual mode by which the God of Israel addressed his people.

The last insuperable objection to this notion is the character of Paul. Neither the brief intimations of the former, nor the more copious delineation of the latter part of his life, authorize us to consider him a man of distempered imagination. Unless the mere fact of his becoming an itinerant teacher of Christianity convict him of this enthusiasm, (which would be an assumption of the point in question,) his argumentative manner of teaching, his sobriety of demeanour, his cool self-command in the most trying exigencies; the extraordinary combination of vigour and prudence, of boldness and persuasiveness, of pliancy in trivial matters, and unshaken perseverance in his main object, alike contradict this supposition. According to this theory, once and once only

he is seized with a fit of melancholy enthusiasm, which changes all his views, prospects, occupations, habits, opinions; but in this all the extravagance of his imagination explodes as it were for ever, and leaves him a humble, discreet, resolute, and rational adherent to the cause which he has adopted. The gloomy and timid Saul trembles before a hurricane, the cool and intrepid Paul confronts every terror of nature and of man. Popular tumult cannot deprive him of his self command, nor the pomp and awe of authority in the least appal him. If taken literally, *he fights with beasts at Ephesus*, if figuratively, he is exposed to dangers equally dreadful. He is tranquil upon the raging ocean, and while the mariners despair, he alone is firm. A flash of lightning causes him to apostatize from the synagogue, a whole life of terror, trial, and suffering attaches him only more closely to the Church of Christ.

Thus then the conduct and character of Paul are direct testimonies to the truth of his miraculous conversion, the former is our guarantee for his sincerity, the latter

our security against his having been the victim of deception. If he invented this whole consistent and circumstantial story, he must have been a designing and ambitious hypocrite; his companions must have connived at his falsehood; Ananias have been in collusion with him; all the Christians at Damascus, and the apostles themselves, the weakest and most unsuspicious dupes, to be imposed upon by so ungrounded a falsehood. He must have been this hypocrite for the sake of embracing poverty and self-denial, hatred and contempt, toil and suffering, death itself, of which he was in perpetual danger; or he must have formed the splendid design of becoming the benefactor of mankind, by the publication of a new religion—a design which it is impossible to conceive compatible either with the fraud to which he must have condescended in order to obtain admission into the Christian brotherhood, or with reason, which must have recoiled at the hopeless improbability of converting the world to a belief in the divinity of a Jewish peasant, who had been publicly crucified.

On the other hand, if Paul was deceived by others, or by the warmth of his own imagination, he must have been a weak and fantastic dreamer. Yet he had the ability, the prudence, the resolution, to preach with success the extraordinary doctrine of Christ crucified over half the habitable world; he had the address to conciliate the other apostles to an admission of his claim to equality; in every public scene he could conduct himself with the coolest self-command, and most intrepid courage; finally, he could obtain for his writings an equal authority with the Gospels which recorded the teaching of their Master, or those of the elder apostles; writings not less distinguished for the consecutive vigour of their arguments, and the depth of their views, than for the exquisite beauty with which they enforce and explain that truth, that humility, that meekness, holiness, and charity, of which the life and the teaching of Christ are the great example.

If then neither hypocrite nor fanatic, Paul must have been, what he announces himself, *an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the*

will of God; one to whom, as Peter declares among the assembled apostles, *God, which knoweth the hearts, bare witness, giving* him *the Holy Ghost, as he did unto us*[o] by whom *the signs of an apostle were wrought in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds*[p]; who asserts, *The Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*[q].

May that Gospel which Paul preached so convince our understandings and purify our hearts, that we *being followers of Paul, as Paul of Christ*[r], may attain that everlasting life which is revealed through Christ Jesus.

[o] Acts xv. 8. [p] 2 Cor. xii. 12. also Rom. xv. 19.
[q] Galat. i. 11, 12. [r] 1 Cor. xi. 1.

LECTURE V.

1 Cor. xii. 10, 11.

To another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will:

In order to accomplish the vast system of proselytism, thus early announced and deliberately proclaimed by the apostles of Christ, it was necessary that some mode of communication should exist, easy, perspicuous, and familiar between the teachers and their converts. A superficial acquaintance with some common medium of intercourse, and an imperfect and indistinct power of imparting their ideas, such for instance as would be sufficient for barter or less intricate commercial concerns, would have been inadequate to their purpose. For to teach a new faith, to communicate new moral and religious notions, to persuade, to convince, to exhort, to explain, a complete idiomati-

cal intimacy with the language of those whom they addressed, and a free and unembarrassed elocution would be indispensable. This difficulty must have occurred to the apostles at the very outset of their undertaking. An early writer on the evidence of Christianity thus expresses their consciousness of this impediment. "Was not "again his language (that of Christ) plainly "divine, when he distinctly said to those "his very humble disciples, *Go and teach* "*all nations*. And how is this possible? (the "disciples would naturally say, replying "something after this manner to their Mas-"ter,) How, for instance, are we to preach "to the Romans? how shall we converse "with the Egyptians? of what language "shall we make use to the Greeks, men "who have been brought up in the Syrian "tongue alone? how shall we address Per-"sians, and Armenians, and Chaldeans, and "Scythians, and Indians, and any other of "the barbarous nations[a]?" This testimony

[a] Ὅρα εἰ μὴ ὡς ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ πάλιν προήκατο φωνὴν, αὐτολεξεὶ φήσας τοῖς εὐτελεστάτοις ἐκείνοις αὐτοῦ μαθηταῖς, Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. καὶ πῶς εἶπον ἂν οἱ μαθηταὶ

of Eusebius is not merely valuable, as declaring the traditionary opinion of the Church, with regard to the miracle of the gift of tongues, but is of further importance from his situation as bishop of Cæsarea, where he would necessarily be acquainted with the extent and prevalence of the Syrian language. For there appears no reason why the Syrian should have encroached upon the Greek, during the three first centuries of Christianity, the reverse might rather have been expected

τῷ διδασκάλῳ, πάντως που ἀποκρινάμενοι, Τοῦθ' ἡμῖν ἔσται δυνατόν; πῶς γὰρ Ῥωμαίοις, φέρε, κηρύξομεν; πῶς δὲ Αἰγυπτίοις διαλεχθησόμεθα; ποίᾳ δὲ χρησόμεθα λέξει πρὸς Ἕλληνας, ἄνδρες τῇ Σύρων ἐντραφέντες μόνῃ φωνῇ; Πέρσας δὲ καὶ Ἀρμενίους, καὶ Χαλδαίους, καὶ Σκύθας, καὶ Ἰνδοὺς καὶ εἴτινα βαρβάρων γένοιτο ἔθνη—*Euseb. Dem. Evang.* lib. III. p. 136. edit. Col. 1688. Compare likewise *Dem. Evang.* lib. III. p. 112.

Chrysostom says the same: Καὶ πῶς τούτους, φησὶν, ἅπαντας ἐπεσπάσαντο οἱ ἀπόστολοι; ὁ μίαν γλῶτταν ἔχων, τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν, πῶς τὸν Σκύθην, καὶ τὸν Ἰνδὸν, καὶ Σαυρομάτην, καὶ τὸν Θρᾷκα ἔπεισε;—Oratio quod Christus sit Deus, vol. VI. p. 628. ed. Sav.

And again more explicitly: Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁμόφωνοι τοῖς πειθομένοις ἦσαν, ἀλλὰ ξένην τινὰ καὶ παρηλλαγμένην παρὰ πάσας τὰς γλώττας κεκτημένοι φωνὴν, τὴν Ἑβραΐδα λέγω—Ibid. p. 635.

The book called the Acts of the Apostles declares with distinctness, such as the ingenuity of all those more recent critics, who have explained away, limited, and depreciated the miracle, so as to leave nothing miraculous, has been, in my opinion, unable to elude[b], that this difficulty was surmounted

[b] Middleton's Essay, I believe, first directed the attention of theologians to the subject. Ernesti interfered between Middleton and his antagonist, bishop Warburton, and abandoned the utility of the miracle, as a means of propagating the gospel. The later history of the controversy may be seen in Kuinoel. Mr. Townsend has condensed, I suppose from Kuinoel, the various opinions of those who would do away the miracle altogether. "Eichhorn suggests, that to speak with tongues means only that some of the apostles uttered indistinct and inarticulate sounds, and those who uttered foreign or new or other words, were Jews who had come to Jerusalem from the remote provinces of the empire, and being excited by the general fervour, united with them in praising God in their own languages. Herder is of opinion that the word γλῶσσα is used to express only obsolete, foreign, or unusual words. Paulus conjectures, that those who spoke with different tongues were foreign Jews, the hearers Galilæans. Meyer, that they either spoke in terms or language not before used, in an enthusiastic manner, or united Hebrew modes of expression with Greek or Latin words. Heinrichsius, or Heinrich, that the apostles suddenly spoke the pure Hebrew language in a sublime and elevated style. Kleinius, that the apo-

by a supernatural communication of the power of expressing themselves in all those languages in which the gospel was to be preached. As however the question is of great importance, and by no means devoid of interest, it may be expedient, and is unquestionably essential to the argument for the credibility of Christianity from the con-

stles, excited by an extraordinary enthusiasm, expressed their feelings with more than usual warmth and eloquence." *Townsend, New Testament arranged, in loco.*

The notion of Kuinoel is as ingenious, but not more satisfactory. According to him, the rigid Jews would not endure that divine worship should be offered in any language but the Hebrew or Syrochaldaic, only the more liberal would tolerate Greek. But the whole assembly, struck with astonishment at the wonderful circumstances which attended the effusion of the Holy Ghost, lost all self-command, and, each breaking out in the language most familiar to him, began to magnify God. Thus he assumes, that Jews from all quarters were already enlisted among the ranks of the Christians, and supposes that the multitude mistook all this assemblage of foreign Jews for Galilæans; the multitude themselves being foreign Jews from all quarters. Kuinoel's attempts to reconcile the other passages in the Acts, in which this gift is mentioned, with his system of interpretation, appear to me among the most unfortunate specimens of theologic criticism into which an acute and learned mind has ever been betrayed by its attachment to a preconceived theory.

duct of the apostles, to examine into the manner in which they attained this qualification for the ministry, and to ascertain, if possible, whether the miracle was necessary, or if not absolutely necessary, so adapted for the furtherance of the design, as to warrant, if I may so speak, this interference of the divine Providence; since the most pious Christian must acknowledge the Deity never to work miracles, except with a great and worthy object.

The general opinion which militates against the literal belief in the gift of tongues is this, that the Greek language was of itself sufficient for the propagation of the Christian religion, and that Greek was so universally prevalent in Palestine, that the apostles probably spoke it without especial inspiration [c]. Now the first objection which occurs to this statement is the extreme improbability that the miracle should have been invented or believed, especially by the Greek fathers, if it were thus entirely superfluous. If there are not

[c] From Erasmus downwards, the general current of theological opinion has run in this direction.

Jews from all quarters in Jerusalem, speaking only the various languages of the countries in which they usually resided, and possessing no common medium of intercourse; if all, the apostles included, could speak and understand Greek, who would have thought of fabricating so unnecessary a wonder, one which might so easily be confuted, and could produce no advantage whatever. Besides, of all persons Luke was least likely to invent, or to record, unless authoritatively assured of its truth, a circumstance so extraordinary; for he was more of a Greek than any other of the sacred writers, and the follower of Paul, to whom, if to any of the apostles, the gift of tongues was unnecessary. Still less would the evangelic writers have continued to speak of this gift as a standing miracle, if the apostles had no opportunity of exercising it, nor would all the Greek and Latin Fathers have acquiesced in an interpretation of Scripture, of which every one, especially the Syrian Eusebius above quoted, must have perceived the futility [d].

[d] It would not be difficult to trace the unanimous con-

There is another curious confirmation, if not of the necessity, of the probable utility of this gift, or, to say the least, a comment on the general belief of the church in its reality, I mean the imitation of the miracle by those, who after the manner of the apostles, went about the world, converting their hearers to a new system of belief. "And indeed," says Damis, addressing Apollonius of Tyana, "as to the languages of "the Barbarians, as many as there are, and "there is one of the Armenians, another of "the Medes and Persians, another of the "Cadusians, I have a knowledge of them "all." "And I, my friend," says Apollonius, "understand them all, having learnt "none [e]." Alexander the false prophet in

sent of all Christian writers in the common interpretation. In addition to the testimonies from Eusebius and Chrysostom I shall merely subjoin the following, as shewing the only difference of opinion which existed on the subject: "Unus fuit e nobis, qui, cum unam emitteret vo-"cem, ab diversis populis, et dissona oratione loquenti-"bus, familiaribus verborum sonis, et suo cuique utens "existimabatur eloquio." *Arnob. contra Gent.* I. 46. Some others of the Fathers espoused this whimsical opinion.

[e] Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰς φωνὰς τῶν βαρβάρων, ὁπόσαι εἰσιν· εἰσὶ δὲ,

Lucian, is likewise embarrassed with this difficulty; for when any of the Barbarians came to him for oracles, he was obliged to keep them waiting a considerable time for his answers, in order that he might find persons qualified to interpret their questions[f].

To return to the Scripture. I can scarcely conceive what could constitute the broad line of demarcation between the Hellenist and native Jews, except the difference of language. The early church was evidently formed of two parties. *In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians,*

ἄλλη μὲν Ἀρμενίων, ἄλλη δὲ Μήδων τε καὶ Περσῶν, ἄλλη δὲ Καδουσίων· μεταλαμβάνω δὲ πάσας. ἐγὼ δὲ, εἶπεν, ὦ ἑταῖρε, πασῶν ξυνίημι, μαθὼν οὐδεμίαν. Philost. Vita Apoll. I. 19. Compare Eusebius in Hieroclem c. IX. et c. XIV. where it appears that on one occasion Apollonius was obliged to have recourse to an interpreter.

[f] Ἀλλὰ καὶ βαρβάροις πολλάκις ἔχρησεν, εἴ τις τῇ πατρίῳ ἔροιτο φωνῇ Συριστὶ, ἢ Κελτιστὶ, οὐ ῥαδίως ἐξευρίσκων τινὰς ἐπιδημοῦντας ὁμοεθνεῖς τοῖς δεδωκόσι. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πολὺς ἐν μέσῳ χρόνος ἦν τῆς τε δόσεως τῶν βιβλίων, καὶ τῆς χρησμωδίας, ὡς ἐν τοιούτῳ κατὰ σχολὴν λυοιντό τε οἱ χρησμοὶ ἀσφαλῶς, καὶ εὑρίσκοιντο οἱ ἑρμηνεῦσαι δυνάμενοι ἕκαστα. Lucian. Alex. Pseud. c. LI.

ἑλληνιστῶν [g], *against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration* [h]. Now nothing was so likely to produce this misunderstanding as dissimilarity of language [i]; hence an argument adduced

[g] I have not the slightest hesitation in assuming that the Hellenistæ were Jews speaking the Greek language, and usually residing in Greek cities, not proselytes, or heathen converts. "The Jews to whom this (the Chal-"dee) was the mother tongue were called Hebrews; "and from thence are distinguished from the Hellenists, "which every one knows." *Lightfoot on John* v. 2. Compare Schœtgen. Hor. Heb. in loco. For the different opinions of learned men on this point, see Fabricius Lux Evangel. c. IV. Notwithstanding the evasion of Salmasius, the distinction of Nicolas, as a proselyte of Antioch, is conclusive that the rest were Jews.

[h] Acts vi. 1.

[i] The native Jews despised the Hellenists. Biscoe suggests that this was the origin of the murmurings of the Hellenists against the Jews, because being considered an inferior race, they might be jealous of every real or supposed neglect. On Acts, I. 90. According to the same author Ἑλληνίσται (Acts ix. 29.) is translated in the Syriac version, *Jews speaking the Greek tongue.* I. 86. Another reason has been given for this jealousy. "E con-"tra videntur Judæorum multi hanc versionem vitupe-"rasse, (vid. not.) et Hellenistas propter ejus usum odio "prosecutos esse. Unde discordiam inter Hebræos et "Hellenistas, Act. vi. 1. licet ex alia causa profectam, ex "Bibliorum tum discrimine primo ortam, et postea con-"tinuatam observarunt multi, quibus assentit Jos. Scali-

by Middleton[k] in support of the opinion, that Greek was generally spoken in Jerusalem, because the names of the seven deacons are almost all Greek, may be made to bear the other way. For, not to insist on the opinion of Grotius[l] and Rosenmuller, that Luke sometimes Hellenised Hebrew names, nothing could be more natural, as nothing could more clearly evince the disinterested views of the whole body, than the selection of these officers from the party complaining, that is to say, from the Hellenist converts. Some indeed have supposed that the deacons were not appointed to superintend the general distribution, but to watch over the particular interests of the Grecian converts.

"ger, qui ex Benjaminis Itinerario notat Alexandriæ "duo fuisse Judæorum genera, Babyloniorum et Helle-"nistarum, quorum illi hos cane pejus et angue oderunt, "legentes barbare, et legentes Ægyptiace, quum versio "illa confecta fuit in Ægypto." *B. Walton. Prolegomena.* On the Hellenistæ compare Lightfoot on John vii. 35.

k Essay on the Gift of Tongues, Works, vol. II. 81.

l Nomina hæc omnia sunt Græca, quod non mirum in Alexandrinis, in Judæis vero in Judæa natis credo nomina fuisse Hebræa, quæ Lucas Græce extulerit. *Grotius in Acta.* VI. 5. Compare Rosenmuller. Benson (in his

But the general prevalence of the Greek language in Palestine, after the closest investigation which I have been able to institute, appears to me to have been asserted in direct opposition to all authorities, and upon no grounds whatever, except an inference from its gradual extension in other countries. It is now almost universally allowed, that our Lord and his apostles usually spoke the vernacular language of Palestine; a Syro-Chaldaic [m], or, as it is some-

history of the first planting of Christianity) has advanced an opinion similar to that in the text.

[m] This plain fact was not received without considerable resistance on the part of the more enthusiastic admirers of the Greek language, and the more strenuous adherents to the Septuagint version. "An vero Christo et apostolis vernacula fuerit lingua Syriaca, a quibusdam quærifur. Widmanstadius, qui primus in Europa Novum Testamentum Syriacum edidit, præfat. docet, hanc linguam Redemptoris nostri ortu, educatione, doctrina, miraculis, corporis et sanguinis sui confectione eucharistica, ac Patris etiam æterni voce, bis cœlo ad eum emissa, consecratam, et hac lingua scriptam esse antiquam versionem, quam ipse edidit. Cujus sententiæ plerique suffragantur, Marius, Bodescanius, Trostius, Tremellius, Buxtorf." *Walton. Proleg.*

The opponents indeed did not altogether deny that our Lord spoke Syriac, but that it was the same dialect with the Syriac version. Reiske however considered the

times called, an Aramaic dialect, which, however corrupted from the purer language of the older Scriptures, is called Hebrew, both in the New Testament and in Josephus. This appears evident, as well from the general idiom of their language, as from the Syro-Chaldaic words retained in several places, when the evangelists wished to preserve the precise expression which our Lord

question set at rest: "Quam linguam Jesu Christo, nostro Servatori optimo, tandem vernaculam attribuemus? Hic vero ancipiti dubitatione nulla distrahemur, neque anxio conatu occupabimur circa illud, quod citra laborem doceri posse dudum Erpenius judicavit, sed Chaldæo-Syriacam Servatori nostro benignissimo asseremus, quam historia, usus, et communis doctorum opinio huc usque illi adseruerunt. Nostra equidem charta non patietur, ut in testimoniis theologorum et philologorum conquirendis evagemur: verumtamen intrepidi illud affirmamus, eruditissimos quosque viros in eandem sententiam concessisse." *Reiske, Diss. Phil. de ling. vern. J. C.*

Kuinoel has made a statement about the speeches of St. Peter, the accuracy of which, I leave to be decided by the learned orientalists, but which, if correct, is of great importance. "Hæ ipsæ autem Petri orationes stilo et charactere structuraque verborum haud parum discrepant ab orationibus Pauli . . . . *singuli loci verbum de verbo in Hebraicum sermonem possunt transferri.*" He argues from hence, that Luke must have written from some earlier Syro-Chaldaic document, at all events it is a strong proof that the apostle ordinarily spoke that language.

used, and which they generally explain or paraphrase in Greek. Not merely however was this dialect their vernacular tongue, but a remarkable passage seems to intimate, that men of the class from which the apostles were selected spoke no other, certainly not Greek. *Canst thou speak Greek*[n]*?* is the exclamation of the governor to St. Paul, mistaking him for a certain Egyptian, who had obtained an extensive influence over an insurrectionary multitude in Judæa. Upon which St. Paul immediately commences his address to his countrymen in the Hebrew tongue[o]. But he would scarcely have harangued the people in a language probably unknown to the governor, with whom his first object was to exculpate himself from every suspicion of teaching seditious doctrines, unless it had been absolutely necessary, in order to make himself intelligible to the people[p].

[n] Acts xxi. 37. [o] Acts xxi. 40.

[p] Mr. Broughton, in his masterly reply to *Palæoromaica*, has proposed a version of this passage different from that in our common Bibles. It is certainly extraor-

Next to the sacred writings is the unexceptionable authority of Josephus, who furnishes us with several incidental facts, which tend to the same conclusion. Josephus was a man of some rank, and of cultivated education; but, 1. he distinctly states both the difficulty which he experienced in making himself master of the Greek language,

dinary, that the governor should conclude that Paul was no Egyptian from his speaking Greek, which to an Alexandrian would have been his native dialect. I apprehend, however, that the governor thought more of the character than the birthplace of this Egyptian, whose eloquence in the vernacular language of Palestine was proved by the success with which he preached rebellion to his numerous followers.

But the main stress of my argument rests on St. Paul's transition from Greek, when he addressed the governor, to Hebrew, when he harangued the people; a transition which, if not necessary, would have excited suspicion.

I am inclined likewise to suspect, that among the reasons which induced the high priests to employ Tertullus, apparently a professional orator, to accuse Paul, might have been their diffidence in their own ability to plead against a man equally skilled in both languages; unless indeed Tertullus, whose name is clearly Latin, was employed in deference to the Roman practice, which required all judicial proceedings to be conducted in Latin. Indeed, the speech of Tertullus appears to me to have a remarkable Latin cast.

especially as regards grammatical accuracy and correct pronunciation; and the national prejudice he had to overcome, which strongly discountenanced the learning foreign languages, so that scarcely one or two had attained to perfection in that study[q]; and even he himself, after he had composed his history, submitted it to certain critics, who were to correct the Greek style[r]. 2. In another passage he mentions as a remarkable circumstance the proficiency of a certain Justus in Greek literature[s]. 3. Josephus himself first wrote his history in the Syro-Chaldaic language, and afterwards in Greek, for those readers who were under the dominion of the Romans[t]. But it

q Καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν δὲ γραμμάτων ἐσπούδασα μετασχεῖν, τὴν γραμματικὴν ἐμπειρίαν ἀναλαβών· τὴν δὲ περὶ τὴν προφορὰν ἀκρίβειαν πάτριος ἐκώλυσε συνήθεια· παρ' ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐκείνους ἀποδέχονται τοὺς πολλῶν ἐθνῶν διάλεκτους ἐκμαθόντας. Joseph. Ant. lib. 20. ad fin. et infra, Διὰ τοῦτο πολλῶν πονησάντων περὶ τὴν ἄσκησιν ταύτην, μόλις τινὲς δύο ἢ τρεῖς κατώρθωσαν, καὶ τῶν πόνων τὴν ἐπικαρπίαν εὐθὺς ἐλάβον.

Οὐ πανὺ μὲν οἱ Ἰουδαίοι τὰ Ἑλλήνων φιλολογοῦσι. Orig. cont. Cels. II. 34.

r Χρησάμενος τισὶ πρὸς τὴν Ἑλληνίδα φωνὴν συνεργοῖς. Contra Apion. I. 9.

s Josephi Vita.

t Προὐθέμην ἐγὼ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν, Ἑλλάδι

should seem that the Jews in Palestine must be included under the description of Barbarians, for whom the former history was designed; as we can scarcely understand why Josephus, connected as he was with the Romans, and remote both by birth and residence from the Oriental and Mesopotamian Jews, should first consult the convenience of the latter. But as his history was in some sort a vindication of his own conduct to the Jews of Palestine, among whom he had lived, and held a distinguished command, it is natural that he should first address them in their native idiom. 4. During the siege, Josephus appears regularly to have discharged the duty of interpreter; an office which would have been entirely unnecessary, if Titus and his captains, and the Jews likewise, had been familiar with Greek. At one time we are informed that Titus "sends down Josephus "to address them in their native language." At another, "But Josephus, standing on "an eminence, so as not to be heard by

γλώσσῃ μεταβαλὼν, ἃ τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις τῇ πατρίῳ συντάξας ἀνέπεμψα πρότερον, ἀφηγήσασθαι. B. J. in init.

"John alone, but by the multitude also, con-
"veyed to them in the Hebrew language the
"words of Cæsar." At a third, "Titus himself
"having placed an interpreter near him, be-
"gan to address them." And lastly, in his trea-

u Καὶ τὸν Ἰώσηπον καθίει τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ διαλέγεσθαι. B. J. v. 9. Καὶ ὁ Ἰώσηπος, ὡς ἂν εἰ μὴ τῷ Ἰωάννῃ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς, ἐν ἐπηκόῳ στὰς, τά τε τοῦ Καίσαρος διήγγειλεν Ἑβραΐζων. VI. 2.

Παραγγείλας δὲ τοῖς στρατιώταις Τίτος, θυμοῦ τε καὶ βελῶν μένειν ἐγκρατεῖς, καὶ τὸν ἑρμηνέα παραστησάμενος, ὅπερ ἦν τεκμήριον τοῦ κρατεῖν, πρῶτος ἤρξατο λέγειν. VI. 6.

It may be worth while to subjoin the following circumstance: Σκοποὶ οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν πύργων καθεζόμενοι, προεμήνυον, ὁπόταν σχασθείη τὸ ὄργανον, καὶ ἡ πέτρα φέροιτο, τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ βοῶντες, ὁ ἰὸς ἔρχεται. V. 6.

The only passage which I have been able to discover in Josephus, which much favours the prevalence of Greek in Jerusalem, is the permission which was granted to the Jews of erecting pillars in the precincts of the temple, with inscriptions on them in the Greek and Latin language, "Let no one pass these bounds." But these inscriptions were exclusively addressed to the Roman soldiery; the native Jews knew the permitted limits, which were defined by custom and the *religio loci*. Rosenmuller has made a curious observation on the Hebrew being inscribed, as well as the Greek and Latin, over the cross: "Græco sermone scripta erat hæc αἴτια ob maxi-
"mam turbam Hellenistarum, quæ ad pascha convene-
"rat, quanquam alioqui Græco sermoni a Macedonicis
"temporibus et in Palæstina Judæi vicinæque gentes
"assueverant. Latino sermone scriptus erat titulus ob

tise against Apion, Josephus states that he alone in the Roman army, we may presume as a person of trust, understood the accounts given by the deserters, τὰ παρὰ τῶν αὐτομόλων ἀπαγγελλόμενα μόνος αὐτὸς συνίην. If in objection to the inference drawn from these latter incidents, it is suggested that few except the lower order of the people were crowded into Jerusalem at this period, they at least were not inferior, generally speaking, to the fishermen of Gennesareth or the artisans of Galilee[x]. If the Talmudic writings are admissible as authority, a learned Italian, after an investigation of their evidence, concludes, that the tradition of the whole synagogue declares the Syro-Chaldaic to have been the language in general use throughout Palestine[y]. I consider therefore the prevalence

"majestatem imperii; Hebræo ob locum in quo suppli-"cium sumebatur." *in Luc.* xxiii. 38. Why not because it was the vernacular language of the multitude? Nonnus paraphrases it thus: Αὐσονίῃ γλώσσῃ τε, Σύρῳ, καὶ Ἀχαιΐδι φωνῇ.

[x] It is worth observing, that John of Gischala and a great number of the besieged were Galilæans.

[y] E per non multiplicare testimonianze ed autorità, Rabbi Azaria de Rossi nel suo libro cui fece il titolo di

of the Greek tongue among the lower orders in Judæa[z] as a gratuitous assumption,

Meor enaim, lume degli occhi, apertamente attesta, come vedremo anche in seguito, che il Caldeo era ora volgare e familiare alla plebe, e che la lingua usata in que tempi presso i Palestini, ed i Vangelisti, era la Caldea. Tale e la mente di tutti gli Ebrei, e tale la tradizione della sinagoga intera. *De Rossi della lingua propria de Christo.*

[z] The distinguished critic however, quoted above, although in some degree inclined to lower the miracle of the gift of tongues, has in another place stated, with his usual perspicuity, what I conceive to have been the real state of the spoken language in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

"Quod enim aliter sentientes de usu Græcæ et Latinæ "linguæ in omnibus universi Romani imperii provinciis "dicunt, id quidem est verum, sed restringendum tamen "videtur ad lautioris conditionis homines, et alios qui "negotiorum causa sæpe itinera faciebant, non extenden-"dum ad omnes plebeios. Et fac, vernaculas fuisse lin-"guas, Græcam et Latinam, in plerisque Romani imperii "provinciis, *vernaculæ tamen non fuerunt in Palæstina,* "*nec vernaculæ fuerunt apostolis.* Græcæ quidem lin-"guæ peritiam sibi comparaverant lectione versionis "Græcæ Alexandrinæ. Sed aliud est intelligere lin-"guam exteram ita ut libros in illa lingua scriptos legere "et intelligere possis, aliud est in eadem loqui et scri-"bere. Iste apostolorum habitus animi sensus Græce et "Latine proferendi, omnino ad Πνεῦμα referendus est, "quo operante ausi sunt linguis peregrinis laudes Dei "celebrare, et prompte de rebus divinis disserere, *in Act.* "ii." The apostles' early familiarity with the Septuagint is assuredly an assumption which requires proof.

unsupported by proof[a]. Greek was unquestionably vernacular in the numerous Macedonian colonies in Syria, and of course was that of the court and of public transactions throughout the kingdoms of the Syro-Grecian kings[b]. But Judæa was hedged in by national prejudices and its own peculiar customs. The mercantile, the educated part of the community, those about the court of Herod, who affected to incorporate Grecian with Jewish customs[c], acquired a

[a] Mr. Townsend has argued, that Greek was in general use in Judæa, because the Jewish writers have used many Greek words in their Hebrew: he might prove by the same argument that French is the vernacular language in London. I find from the very able preface to the translation of Schleiermacher's Essay on St. Luke, that professor Hug, in his introduction to the New Testament, has discussed at length the progress of the Greek language in Judæa. I have not been able to obtain the original work, and regret the delay of Dr. Waite's promised translation. I have seen however a compendium of Hug's work in French by Monsieur Cellerier, in which he professes to give the heads of Hug's argument on this subject: if he has fairly represented them, I see no reason for altering any statement that I have made.

[b] See Brerewood, Inquiry touching Languages.

[c] Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξέβαινε τῶν πατρῴων ἐθῶν, καὶ ξενικοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ὑποδιέφθειρε τὴν πάλαι κατάστασιν, ἀπαρεγχείρητον οὖσαν. Joseph. Ant. XV. 8. 1.

knowledge of Greek, as the higher classes in Europe of French. Yet this was regarded with the greatest jealousy by the rigorous Jews even of the educated classes[d]. But that it descended lower, and reached

[d] Ich erwahne nicht einmahl, unter was fur einem hass die Griecishe Sprache bey dem Juden zu Jerusalem lag, die sie immer einer heidnischen unheiligkeit verdachtig hielten. *Michaelis, Erklarung des Briefes an die Hebräer*. Judæis Palæstinensibus, imprimis severioribus, invisum erat studium linguarum peregrinarum, et ab usu alius quam sanctæ, i. e. Hebrææ veteris et Syro-Chaldaicæ, in religione tradenda et precibus faciendis abhorrebant, lenius sentientes usum Græcæ linguæ concedebant. *Kuinoel. in Act.* ii. 4. The latter clause, as far as the Jews of Jerusalem are concerned, is very questionable.

Menachoth. fol. 99: Dumæ filius, qui ex R. Ismaelis sorore genitus erat, interrogavit avunculum, Num, mihi, qui universam legem dedici, fas est sapientiæ Græcæ studere? Tunc ei inculcavit avunculus dictum, (Jos. i. 8.) *Ne discedito liber iste legis ex ore tuo, sed studio ejus incumbe interdiu et nocte.* Age igitur, reputa tecum, quænam sit illa hora quæ nec ad diem nec ad noctem pertineat: quam si inveneris, licebit tibi sapientiæ Græcæ operam navare.

Medrash Tehillin; Quæsiverunt R. Josua f. Levi, Quoad docebit homo filium suum sapientiam Græcam? Respondit iis, Ea hora quæ neque est diei, neque noctis. *Menachoth fol.* 64. 2. Maledictus est, qui alit porcos, et qui docet filium suum sapientiam Græcam. *Kuinoel, in Act.* ii. 4.

the body of the common people, appears to me, of itself improbable, in direct opposition to the evidence of the Scripture, of Josephus and of Jewish tradition, and supported by no authority whatever [c]. If then the apostles addressed the assembled multitudes on the day of Pentecost, proclaiming, as they declare, the resurrection of the Lord

[c] See Michaelis, translated by bishop Marsh, vol. III. p. 143. with Marsh's note. I have not seen the *second* edition of Michaelis, Erklarung des briefes an die Hebräer; but the objections of the learned doctor Masch, in his Abhandlungen von der Grundsprache des evangelii Matthæi, to the first, appeared to me quite inconclusive. My argument is not necessarily connected with the controversy about the language in which the Gospel according to St. Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews were written: but I must own, that (if Dr. Townson's hypothesis of a double original, the former one in Hebrew, the other in Greek, be not, as I conceive, the most probable) the defenders of the Hebrew original have the superiority both in authority and argument. But the arguments of Michaelis and Marsh, with those which I have adduced in the text, appear to me conclusive on the great point, that the body of the native people in Palestine spoke the Aramaic dialect, and no other. Wetstein and Jortin are the most decisive on the other side. Lardner concedes, what is sufficient for my argument, "that in very early days there was a Hebrew Gospel." Works, III. 166. 4to. edit. See on the other side Kuinoel, Proleg. in Joan.

Jesus, in what one language did they make themselves intelligible to men thus collected from all quarters of the world[f]? In their own corrupt Galilæan[g]? But, even if this had been understood, was it likely to arrest the attention, and cause any sensation among the Oriental as well as Roman, the Arabian as well as Libyan, the Asiatic as well as Cretan worshippers? Were men likely to pause, and listen to poor artisans haranguing in a provincial jargon? In Greek? But how did the uneducated followers of one, concerning whom the Jews expressed their astonishment, "*How knoweth*

[f] If the apostles on the day of Pentecost had expressed themselves improperly, or with a bad accent, as most people do when they speak a living language which is not natural to them, the hearers, who at that time were not converted to Christianity, would have taken notice of such faults, which since they did not, it is to be supposed that they had nothing of that kind to object. *Jortin. Eccl. Hist.* vol. 1. 58.

[g] On the peculiar pronunciation of the Galilæans see Lightfoot, *Chor. Cent.* c. 87. and note to Lecture III. "Homines Judæi, quia sunt accurati in lingua sua, "confirmata est lex in manibus eorum; Galilæi vero, "quia non sunt accurati in lingua sua, neque stabilita "est lex in manibus eorum." Quoted by Buxtorf from the Talmud. See Reiske's Diss.

this man letters, seeing he hath never learned[h], attain this proficiency in a foreign dialect? Was this accomplishment compatible with their rank in society, their former avocations, their mean and mechanical employments? Before their summons as Apostles, their labours, subsequently the life which they led, chiefly in the villages and towns of Galilee or Judæa, rarely visiting Jerusalem, must have interfered with the acquisition of a foreign tongue. In short, would any one language have been sufficient to make any striking or permanent impression on such a multitude? Or, conceding that Greek was that one language, were the Apostles likely to possess this qualification, to speak this strange dialect, under such peculiar circumstances, with facility, fluency, and precision? I do not mean that in Galilee, as it was called, of the Gentiles, they might not have known a few Greek words and phrases; but I cannot conceive that they could possess that perfect knowledge which would be re-

h Origen takes the *ἀγραμματεῖς* literally; Νυνὶ δὲ τις βλέπων *ἁλιεῖς καὶ τελώνας, μηδὲ τὰ πρῶτα γράμματα μεμαθηκότας. Contra Cels.* I. 62.

quisite, to harangue, to argue, to confute, to illustrate from the Scripture, which, at least in Jerusalem, was not familiarly read in a Greek version[i], in short to unfold the

[i] "Even if it be true that there were synagogues in Jerusalem where the Old Testament was read, not in the Chaldee, but in the Greek version, we cannot thence infer that Greek was generally spoken in Jerusalem. We might as well conclude that German was universally understood in London, because there are German chapels there." Note to Michaelis III. 123. Rosenmuller (see note z p. 190.) espouses a different opinion, but Kuinoel agrees with Michaelis. "Etiam in synagogis Hellenistarum (vid. Act. vi. "1—9.) libri sacri sermone Hebræo prælegebantur, Alex- "andrinam enim versionem prælectam fuisse, probari ne- "quit." The only proof which I can find advanced on the other side is a circumstance which, on Rabbinical authority, occurred in Cæsarea. But Cæsarea was not merely a sea-port town, as Michaelis observes, but a town of Greek origin, and in great part inhabited by Greeks. See Josephus for the dissensions there. B. J. lib. 2.

According to Simon the Septuagint was read after the Hebrew as an exposition. *Crit. Inquiries*, p. 163.

Compare Sturzius de ling. Maced. et Alexand. and Vitringa, de Syn. Vet.

Casaubon expresses himself strongly on this point; "Putare germanos Judæos in Judæa commorantes ver- "sione Græca esse usos, hoc vero nihil est aliud nisi suam "rerum Judaicarum crassam imperitiam palam facere. "Nam pleni sunt libri Rabbinorum detestatione illius "facti et versionis; quam ut infament quid non commi- "niscuntur plerique illorum?" *Exercit.* II.

whole scheme of their religion perspicuously, and without discrepancy. If the whole

Lightfoot has given an extraordinary reason why the Scripture was written in Greek rather than the language of Palestine; "For when the Jewish people were now to "be cast off, and to be doomed to eternal cursing, it was "very improper, certainly, to extol their language, whe-"ther it were the Syriac mother tongue, or the Chaldee, "its cousin language, unto that degree of honour, that "it should be the original language of the New Testa-"ment. Improper, certainly, it was, to write the gospel "in their tongue, who, above all the inhabitants of the "world, most despised and opposed it." *On Matth.* i. 23. As if Christianity had met with no success in Palestine, or in Edessa and Babylonia, where the Syriac and Chaldee were vernacular.—Undoubtedly the Greek was the fittest language in which the New Testament could be written, as by far the best and most extensively known. Whether the Syriac converts had an inspired gospel and epistle in their own language or not, they had a translation from the earliest period, which clearly proves that the Greek was not universally read. The Syriac Paraphrase indeed thus concludes, "Finis evangelii sancti "prædicationis Matthæi, quod prædicaverat *Hebraice* in "regione Palestinæ." On which Morl observes, "Unde "apparet hæc verba nihil aliud indicare, quam quod lin-"gua Ebraica, i. e. lingua tum temporis usitata Chaldæo-"Syra, usus fuerit Matthæus, cum in Palæstina prædica-"vit evangelium." Bishop Marsh observes, that "St. "Matthew never travelled into countries where Greek was "the vernacular tongue." Note to vol. III. p. 144. Now it is singular that Matthew, as a publican, and therefore perhaps, having to transact business with the higher au-

scene be, not deliberate fiction; if the first public proclamation of the Christian religion on the day of Pentecost among the assembled multitudes be not in every fact and every

thorities, is the one of all the apostles most likely to have understood Greek. I say most likely, because as one of the *lower order* of publicans, he might only have to receive of, and account to, his own countrymen.

That the apostles and evangelists subsequently quoted the version of the LXX in their writings is no proof of their acquaintance with that translation at this early period. Michaelis has satisfactorily accounted for this practice. [a] "We must recollect that the apostles wrote for the "use of communities who were ignorant of Hebrew, and "for whom therefore it was necessary to refer to the "Greek version, which was generally read. Had they "given a new and more accurate translation according "to the Hebrew, the reader would not have known what "passage they intended to quote; and had they on the "other hand, in retaining the words of the Septuagint, "taken notice of each inaccuracy, it would have been an "useless ostentation of learning, and they would have "diverted the attention of the reader from the main ob-"ject to the consideration of trifles." *Marsh's Michaelis*, i. 218.

The learned de Rossi, (della lingua propria de Christo) p. 148. 201. agrees with Michaelis.

Of the apocryphal books, Tobit, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, (see pref.) perhaps both the Maccabees, (Origen in Ps. i.) were certainly written in Chaldean, or Aramaic. The Wisdom of Solomon is clearly an Alexandrian work, perhaps that of Philo. See *Whitaker, Orig. of Arianism.*

word imaginary, I can conceive no means adequate to the end, except those which according to the Scriptures were actually employed. Extraordinary as the intervention of divine Providence appears, it is in strict harmony with the exigencies of the case. I must join in the awe-struck astonishment of those who *were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this*[k]*?*

[k] Acts ii. 7—12.

"Catalogus populorum ad ornatum pertinet," says Kuinoel. In this country we are not accustomed to consider the evangelists as ornamental writers. Salmasius has observed with greater propriety, " Gentes ac populi qui hic

Waiving however for the present the apparent necessity of the gift of tongues, for the first publication of Christianity, we must concede the possibility that the apostles, during their residence in Jerusalem, and previous to the preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, might by patient and assiduous study, and the facilities of instruction from the Hellenist Christians, have acquired a command over that language which hereafter was likely to be of such extensive utility. But that they should submit to this diligent study, either for the purpose of conducting a precarious system of imposture, or that enthusiasts should thus coolly sit down and labour to supply the deficiency in their qualifications; in short, that for so desperate an enterprise, and where the chance of success was so improbable, such men should encounter such a course of study, is a new difficulty, not less inex-

" recensentur, partim ἰδικῇ διαλέκτῳ inter se differebat, par-
" tim γενικῇ." *De Lingua Hellenistica.* I have thrown together under the different heads, as they occur in the following sketch of the spoken dialects, what I have been able to collect concerning each.

plicable than the preceding. With the national prejudice which Josephus declares to have existed among their countrymen against the study of foreign languages; with their task but imperfectly fulfilled among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; with their maintenance, even their existence uncertain, that they should attain so perfect an idiomatic acquaintance with this strange tongue, as to preach the Gospel without diffidence or hesitation, and so as to be heard with satisfaction and delight, draws again most largely on our credulity.

Of course we do not include in this part of the discussion the more enlightened and better educated coadjutors, such as Paul and Barnabas, who spoke Greek as their native tongue, and might possibly have considerable proficiency in Latin. But though in the later history of the apostles, we confessedly cannot prove the absolute necessity of the gift of tongues, I am disinclined with Ernesti[1] to question its utility, or the apparent intention of divine Providence to fa-

[1] De Dono Linguarum in Op. theologicis.

cilitate by such means the more rapid and extensive propagation of the Gospel. If ecclesiastical tradition were admissible, on this evidence, of itself by no means improbable, it would appear that some of the apostles exercised their functions in countries far beyond the limits of the Greek, or even the Syriac language[m]. Confining ourselves however to the authorized records of our religion, a rapid sketch of the languages used in the various countries visited by the apostles, whether as the vernacular tongue, or coexisting with the Greek, which was the literary, and perhaps the commercial language, will neither be uninteresting as illustrative of St. Luke's history, nor irrelevant to the general question under discussion.

First however, the utility of such a gift, as that of speaking various tongues without study, may be confirmed by the fact, that certain of the oriental sovereigns are celebrated for their familiarity with different

[m] Philip in Scythia, Bartholomew in India, probably Arabia Felix, Thomas in Parthia, &c. See Cave's Lives of the Apostles.

languages, an accomplishment obviously not worth acquiring, and certainly not worth boasting, if entirely useless and superfluous. Mithridates king of Pontus is reported by Quintilian, Pliny, and Aulus Gellius, to have spoken twenty-two languages of different people within his own dominions [n]. Cleopatra, according to Plutarch, was distinguished for a similar accomplishment [o]. There is also a curious passage in the same author, respecting the capture of a wild man by Sylla, who was questioned δι' ἑρμηνέων

[n] Mithridates autem, Ponti atque Bithyniæ rex inclytus, qui a Cn. Pompeio bello superatus est, duarum et viginti nationum, quas sub ditione habuit, linguas percalluit; earumque omnium gentium viris haud unquam per interpretem collocutus est; sed ut quemque ab eo appellari usus fuit, proinde loqui et oratione ipsius, non minus scite quam si gentilis ejus esset, locutus est." *Aulus Gellius* XVII. 17. Compare Pliny VII. 24. XXV. 2. Quintilian II. 2.

[o] Ἡδονὴ δὲ καὶ φθεγγομένης ἐπῆν τῷ ἤχῳ, καὶ τὴν γλῶτταν, ὥσπερ ὄργανόν τι, πολύχορδον, εὐπετῶς τρέπουσα, καθ' ἣν βούλοιτο διάλεκτον, ὀλίγοις παντάπασι δι' ἑρμηνέως ἐνετύγχανε βαρβάροις· τοῖς δὲ πλείστοις αὐτὴ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπεδίδου τὰς ἀποκρίσεις, οἷον Αἰθίοψι, Τρωγλοδύταις, Ἑβραίοις, Ἄραψι, Σύροις, Μήδοις, Παρθυαίοις. πολλῶν δὲ λέγεται καὶ ἄλλων ἐκμαθεῖν γλώττας, τῶν πρὸ αὐτῆς βασιλέων οὐδὲ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων ἀνασχομένων περιλαβεῖν διάλεκτον, ἐνίων δὲ καὶ τὸ Μακεδονίζειν ἐκλιπόντων. Plutarch. Anton.

πολλῶν, an expression which intimates the common use of interpreters in the Roman armies [p].

Travelling eastward from Palestine, and leaving to the right a large tract of country inhabited by the Arabians [q], who had their distinct language, the vernacular was what is called by the Greeks and Romans Syriac. Of this there were two branches bearing a close affinity; that of Judæa, East Aramaic, or Chaldee, that of Mesopota-

p *Plutarch. Sylla.* The Carthaginian in Plautus is a great linguist: "Et is omnes linguas scit, sed dissimulat "sciens, se scire." The military orders, if I rightly apprehend a passage in Josephus, were given to the different troops in their native languages. Ὅ τε κῆρυξ δεξιὸς τῷ πολεμάρχῳ παραστὰς, εἰ πρὸς πόλεμόν εἰσιν ἕτοιμοι, τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ τρὶς ἀναπυνθανέται. B. J. III. 5.

q See Beausobre, Hist. du Manichéisme, vol. I. 20. On the Arabian language of Yemen he writes, "Elle a "été connue autrefois sous le nom de l'Inde, et c'est là "vraisemblablement, et non dans les Indes orientales, "que le Christianisme fut porté par quelcun des apo-"stres, ou de leurs premiers disciples."

Michaelis thinks it probable that Bartholomew preached the Gospel there. vol. III. 125.

Paul's flight from Damascus into Arabia is well known. The Nabathean Arabs wrote letters to Antigonus in the Syriac language. *Prid. Connect.* I. 8.

mia, and Edessa, called West Aramaic, or Syrian. Hence Luke's distinction between the dwellers of Mesopotamia and Judæa, both of which were to a certain degree different from Galilæan, a very corrupt dialect of West Aramaic[r]. This language ex-

[r] The dialect of Jerusalem was East Aramæan, or, as we call it, Chaldee; and according to this dialect are written the Aramæan words that are found in the Greek Testament, for instance Acts i. 19. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. The Syriac New Testament is written in the same language, in a different dialect. In Galilee, though West Aramæan was spoken, that is, the dialect of Syria on this side Euphrates and of Mesopotamia, yet it was extremely corrupted. *Michaelis* II. 41. Strabo carries the Syrian in the same manner beyond the Euphrates. Τῆς διαλέκτου δὲ μέχρι νῦν διαμενούσης τῆς αὐτῆς, τοῖς τε ἐκτὸς τοῦ Εὐφράτου καὶ τοῖς ἐντός. Lib. II. p. 139.

Fleury mentions a curious proof of the Christian bishops in Syria being ignorant of Greek at a later period; "Dans la haute Syrie la plûpart des évêques n'entendoient point de Grec, et ne sçavoient que le Syriaque, "comme il paroît par les conciles où ils avoient besoin d'interprètes. Conc. d'Ephes. Concil. Calc. Act. X." *Fleury Mœurs des Chrêtiens.*

St. Jerome tells us, "that at the funeral of the famous lady Paula, the psalms were sung in Syriac, Greek, and Latin, because there were men of each language present at the solemnity." *Bingham's Ant.* XIII. 4. 1. see also B. XIV. 1. 11.

The Hermeneuta was a regular office in the church.

tended from the sea to the Euphrates; and though Greek prevailed in the Macedonian colonies, and, as I observed, was the language of public affairs, and appears on the coins of the Seleucidæ [s], yet even close to Antioch, as late as Chrysostom, the country people who came in to the Christian festivals neither spoke nor understood Greek [t]. Zenobia it appears spoke Syriac, and dictated her despatches in that language. She herself was very imperfectly mistress of Greek, and inculcated on her son the advantage of learning Latin, rather than the former tongue [u]. About the Euphrates began

See Bingham's Ant. III. 13, 4. Procopius the martyr was interpreter of the Syriac tongue in Scythopolis. *Act. Proc. ap. Vales. Not. in Euseb. de Mart. Palæst.*

[s] See R. P. Knight. Proleg. in Homerum.

[t] Λαὸς κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἰδίαν γλῶτταν ἡμῖν ἐνηλλαγμένος, κατὰ δὲ τὴν πίστιν ἡμῖν συμφωνῶν. Stat. XIX. in init. Πόλις μὲν γὰρ καὶ χώρα ἐν τοῖς βιωτικοῖς πράγμασιν ἀλλήλων διεστήκασι, κατὰ δὲ τὸν τῆς εὐσεβείας λόγον κοινωνοῦσι, καὶ ἥνωνται. μὴ γάρ μοι τὴν βάρβαρον αὐτῶν φωνὴν ἴδῃς, ἀλλὰ τὴν φιλοσοφοῦσαν αὐτῶν διάνοιαν. τί γάρ μοι ὄφελος ὁμοφωνίας, ὅταν τὰ τῆς γνώμης ᾖ διῃρημένα; τί δέ μοι βλάβος τῆς ἑτεροφωνίας, ὅταν τὰ τῆς πίστεως ᾖ συνημμένα. Ut supra.

[u] Zenobia filios Latine loqui jusserat, adeo ut Græce vel difficile vel raro loquerentur. Ipsa Latini sermonis

the languages of the Armenians, the [x] Parthians, who as a Scythian tribe spoke a Scythian dialect, the Medes and Persians. And here is a circumstance worthy of notice; Luke seems to revert to the older word, Elamites, although the name of the Persians had been long known to the Jews during the captivity, and was in common use among the later prophets. But in this he is in remarkable accordance with the heathen writers of the period, among whom the name of Persia might seem extinct. Till the restoration of that empire in the reign of Alexander Severus, it occurs rarely, if ever. But Media is continually named as a distinct kingdom [y]; and what is more extraordinary, the Elymæi or Elymaites, who seem to have opposed a vigorous resistance to the Parthian conquests, and ap-

non undequaque ignara, sed ut loqueretur pudore cohibita; loquebatur et Ægyptiace ad perfectum modum. *Hist. Aug. Scrip.* p. 190. Hanc epistolam Nicomachus se transtulisse in Græcam ex lingua Syriaca dicit ab ipsa Zenobia dictatam. *Vopiscus*. 862.

[x] Q. Curtius. lib. VII. Isid. Orig. IX. 2. Ancient univ. History, Hist. of the Parthians.

[y] Tac. Ann. VI. 34. XII. 14. XIII. 41.

pear as an independent people in the Roman wars in the East[z].

In all that vast country loosely called Asia Minor, which extended from the frontiers of Syria to the Euxine, the people were partly Barbarians[a], the name by which the Greeks distinguished all nations, who

[z] Elamites, that is, Persians of the province of Elymais, *Jos. Mede. Disc.* XX. For their history see Strabo lib. XVI. and Tacit. Ann. VI. 44. A curious passage from the Talmud may be compared with St. Luke; I do not know the date of it. "Legit quis illud volumen "(Esther) Coptica lingua, aut transfluviali aut Elamitica, aut Meda aut Græca, nondum satisfecit: ecce non "est similitudo, nisi Coptice Coptis legeret, transfluvialibus transfluviali, Elamitis Elamitica, Græcis Græca." *Talm. Tract. Megilla.* quoted by De Rossi.

[a] Οἷον εἴτις τἀνθρωπίνον ἐπιχειρήσας δίχα διελέσθαι γένος, διαιροῖ, καθάπερ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐνθάδε, διανέμουσι, τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ἓν ἀπὸ πάντων ἀφαιροῦντες χωρίς· σύμπασι δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις γένεσιν ἀπείροις οὖσι καὶ ἀμίκτοις καὶ ἀσυμφώνοις πρὸς ἄλληλα βάρβαρον μιᾷ κλήσει προσειπόντος. Plato, Polit. c. 15. Καὶ ὅνπερ τρόπον ἀνθρώπων Ἑλληνῶν οἱ Ἑλληνὲς, βαρβάροις δὲ νῦν οἱ βαρβάροι ὁμογλώττοι διαλέγονται. Philo de Conf. Ling. St. Paul recognizes the distinction; *Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.* 1 Cor. xiv. 11. Even Latin was a *barbarous* language; "Philemo scripsit, Plautus vertit "barbare." *Plaut. Trin.* For the origin of the term see Strabo, lib. XIV. and Herodotus II. 158.

did not speak their language; partly μιξοβάρβαροι, in which both languages coexisted; partly Asiatic Greeks, in which of course that tongue was universally spoken. Now of the barbarous countries [b], Cappadocia, one of those mentioned in the Acts, had its own language [c], according to Jablonski a branch of the ancient Assyrian, and, if we may trust the authority of a Greek novelist, spoken over a very extensive region. It is said to have been a written language, and remained vernacular to the time of St. Ba-

[b] Ephorus and Strabo that cites him make almost all the inland nations of Asia Minor to be barbarians. *Bentley's Confut. of Atheism*, Serm. VI.

[c] Ἰοῦσι δὲ αὐτοῖς διὰ κωμων μεγάλων, πάντων ἦν ἀφθονία τῶν ἐπιτηδείων. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Ἱππόθοος ἐμπείρως εἶχε τῆς Καππαδοκῶν φωνῆς. Xenoph. Ephes. lib. III. in init. The Cappadocians bordering on Paphlagonia had corrupted their own dialect with that of their neighbours. Συνηγορεῖν δ' ἂν δόξεις τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ, διότι πᾶσα ἡ πλησιὸν τοῦ Ἅλυος Καππαδοκία, ὅση παρατείνει τῇ Παφλαγονίᾳ, ταῖς δυσὶ χρῆται διαλέξεσι, καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι πλεονάζει τοῖς Παφλαγονικοῖς. Strabo lib. XII. p. 830. ed. Casaub. Bochart says of the Cappadocians, "non abhorruisse eorum sermonem a Syrio sed "fuisse impurissimum." *in Phaleg.* With this Jablonski agrees. Apollonius of Tyana wrote a book in Cappadocian. *Philost.* lib. IV. 19. Lucian mentions the Cappadocian, Paphlagonian and Bactrian languages. *in Pseud.* XIV.

sil[d]. In what was the kingdom of Mithridates, Bithynia, Paphlagonia and Pontus, the Greek had doubtless spread in the maritime towns, but in Pontus especially the dialects were almost innumerable[e]. In Galatia[f], at the time of Jerom, the Greek had

[d] St. Basil arguing the antiquity of the clause σὺν πνεύματι in the Doxology, speaks of its being in general use in the Mesopotamian and Cappadocian languages. Ὡς δὲ ἐγώ τινος τῶν ἐκ Μεσοποταμίας ἤκουσα, ἀνδρὸς καὶ τῆς γλώσσης ἐμπείρως ἔχοντος, καὶ ἀδιαστρόφου τὴν γνώμην, οὐδὲ δυνατὸν ἑτέρως εἰπεῖν τῇ ἐγχωρίῳ φωνῇ, κἂν ἐθέλωσιν ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς καὶ συλλαβῆς, μᾶλλον δὲ τῶν ἰσοδυναμουσῶν αὐτῇ φωνῶν, κατά τι ἰδίωμα πάτριον, ἀνάγκην αὐτοῖς εἶναι τὴν δοξολογίαν προφέρειν. Καὶ Καππαδόκαι δὲ οὕτω λέγομεν ἐγχωρίως, ἔτι τότε ἐν τῇ τῶν γλωσσῶν διαιρέσει, τὸ ἐκ τῆς λέξεως χρήσιμον προβλεψαμένου τοῦ πνεύματος. Lib. de Spir. Sanct. c. 29. Basil was a Cappadocian bishop.

[e] The Pontic king, who understood some Greek, ἡμιέλλην γάρ τις ὢν ἐτύγχανε, requested to have Nero's dancer, to save him in interpreters; προσοίκους, ἔφη, βαρβάρους ἔχω, οὐχ ὁμογλώττους καὶ ἑρμηνέων οὐ ῥᾴδιον εὐπορῆσαι πρὸς αὐτούς. *Lucian de Salt.* Subjicitur Ponti regio Colchica..... Coraxi urbe ..... quondam adeo clara, ut Timosthenes in eam CCC. nationes, quæ dissimilibus linguis uterentur, descendere prodiderit. Et postea a nostris CXXX. interpretibus negotia ibi gesta. *Plin.* VI. 5.

The limits of Pontus, as it was sometimes used for the whole southern coast of the Euxine, cannot be ascertained.

[f] Galatas, excepto sermone Græco, quo omnis loquitur oriens, propriam linguam eandem pæne habuere quam

not extirpated the original Gaulish or Celtic dialect. Mysia, Paphlagonia, Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Phrygia had each their one or more dialects radically different from the Greek; of the two latter, mentioned by St. Luke, the Phrygian [g] is named as a barbarous language, apparently not unknown, by Plato; in Pamphylia [h], Arrian informs us that some Greek colonists from Æolis had forgotten their native tongue and formed a corrupt and mingled jargon. In the rest of this region [i], the Asia of St. Luke,

Treviri; nec referre si aliqua corruperint. *Jerom.* tom. IV. p. 256.

It should be recollected that St. Paul wrote in *Greek* to the Galatians.

[g] The Phrygian, according to Jablonski, was a Thracian language. Plato clearly calls them Barbarians. Ὅρα τοίνυν, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα τὸ πῦρ μήτι βαρβαρικὸν ᾖ· τοῦτο γὰρ οὔτε ῥάδιον προσάψαι ἐστὶν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ φωνῇ, φανεροί τ' εἰσὶν οὕτως αὐτὸ καλοῦντες Φρύγες, σμικρόν τι παρακλίνοντες. *in Cratylo.* Herodotus speaks of the Phrygian language as distinct from Greek, lib. II. c. 2.

[h] Αὐτίκα τὴν μὲν Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν ἐξελάθοντο, εὐθὺς δὲ βάρβαρον φωνὴν ἵεσαν, οὐδὲ τῶν προσχώρων βαρβάρων, ἀλλὰ ἰδίαν σφῶν, οὔπω πρόσθεν οὖσαν, τὴν φωνήν. Arr. de Exped. Alex. Compare Jablonski's Dissertation.

[i] When Callirhoe, in the romance, had travelled as far as Cilicia, she still heard the Greek language.—Καλλιῤῥόη

the Greek had probably almost extermi-nated the native dialects. Strabo informs us, that the ancient Lydian was still spoken among the Cibyratæ[k], but was entirely ex-tinct in Lydia itself. The Carians[l] also, mingling much with the Greeks, though as in the days of Homer, they might still be

μὲν γὰρ μέχρι .... Κιλικίας κούφως ἔφερε τὴν ἀποδημίαν· καὶ γὰρ Ἑλλάδος ἤκουε φωνῆς. Chærea. et Call. 105.

[k] The Cibyratæ spoke four languages. Τεσσάρσι δὲ γλώτταις ἐχρῶντο οἱ Κιβυράται, τῇ Πισιδικῇ, τῇ Σολύμων, τῇ Ἑλληνίδι, τῇ Λυδῶν, ταύτης δὲ οὐδ' ἴχνος ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ Λυδίᾳ. Lib. XIII. ad fin.

[l] See Strabo lib. IV. p. 978. ed. Casaub.—A passage of considerable importance to the subject has perplexed me. Τοῦτο δὲ μάλιστα συνέβη τοῖς Καρσί· τῶν γὰρ ἄλλων οὐκ ἐπι-πλεκομένων πῶς σφόδρα τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, οὐδ' ἐπιχειρούντων Ἑλλη-νικῶς ζῆν, ἢ μανθάνειν τὴν ἡμετέραν διάλεκτον, πλὴν εἴ τινες σπάνιοι, καὶ κατὰ τύχην ἐπεμίχθησαν, καὶ κατ' ἄνδρα ὀλίγοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων τισίν. οὗτοι δὲ καθ' ὅλην ἐπλανήθησαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, μισθοῦ στρατεύοντες.

The ἄλλοι clearly comprehending all the nations of Asia Minor, which were not Greek, it appears to inti-mate, that the Greek language and customs had not been readily or extensively received in those regions.

Among the arguments for the general dissemination of the Greek language through the Peninsula, the general dissemination of the religion appears important. Paul and Barnabas were taken for Grecian deities at Lystra, and Alexander the Pseudomantis, a Paphlagonian, built his imposture on the Greek mythology.

esteemed βαρβαρόφωνοι, as speaking Greek with a thick and provincial accent, they were no longer βάρβαροι as speaking a different tongue. We have no cotemporary authority for St. Paul, or any other of the apostles, having come in contact with the Thracian, Getic [m], or other Scythian languages. But Illyria, the borders of which Paul reached, was branded by the name of "thrice barbarous [n]." Of course throughout Macedonia [o], Hellas, the Peloponnese

[m] On these languages see Ovid. de Ponto, III. 40. Trist. V. 12. 55.

Threïcio Scythicoque fere circumsonor ore :
Et videor Geticis scribere posse modis.
Trist. III. 14. 47.

In paucis resonant Græcæ vestigia linguæ ;
Hæc quoque jam Getico barbara facta sono.
Ullus in hoc vix est populo, qui forte Latine
Quælibet e medio reddere verba queat.
Trist. V. 7. 51.

[n] Τὴν Εὐριδίκην, ἥτις Ἰλλυρὶς οὖσα καὶ τριβάρβαρος. Plut. de Ed. Lib. On the question whether Paul entered Illyricum, see Lardner, Hist. of Apost. art. St. Paul ; Biscoe, p. 425.

[o] Ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ σύμπασαν τὴν μέχρι Κερκύρας, Μακεδονίαν προσαγορεύουσιν, αἰτιολογοῦντες ἅμα ὅτι καὶ κουρᾶ, καὶ διαλέκτῳ καὶ χλαμύδι, καὶ ἄλλοις τοιούτοις χρῶνται παραπλησίως· ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ δίγλωττοί εἰσι. Strabo, lib. VII. p. 503. Thucydides III. 15. mentions the Ætolian language.

and the Ægean islands, those who spoke the different dialects of Greek were intelligible to each other [p]; Crete alone is remarkable for a very peculiar dialect [q]. In Italy,

[p] In Creta insula usitata erat dialectus quædam linguæ Græcæ cæteris ignota, ut liquet ex grammaticis, qui plures ex ea Glossas protulerunt. *Clericus in loco.*

Salmasius, from Philoponus, makes it out a Doric dialect. Salmasius has made a more hardy assertion. "Ne "eo quidem tempore, quo vixit et scripsit Demosthenes "ab omnibus Atticis suis, et multo minus a cæteris Græ "cis intelligebatur. Attici a communibus Græcis vix "poterant intelligi. Unius dialecti idioma non perci- "piebatur ab altera, de Græciæ linguæ dialectis lo- "quor." *Salm. de Hellenistica.* This is not quite correct; the modern Italian, perhaps the French, certainly our own provincial dialects, differ as much, yet they are mutually understood. To us indeed the Megaric and Spartan *patois* in Aristophanes are nearly unintelligible, We have also Scythian. "The Attic," says Xenophon, "was a selection of Græcisms and barbarisms," *de Rep. Ath.*—A singular confession for so pure an Attic writer! Yet these varieties of dialects must have been in the way of itinerant teachers.

[q] The language of Malta was Phœnician. "Senza fallo "eglino erano nominati barbari, perche non parlavano ne "la Greca ne la Latina favella, e qual linguaggio usavano "eglino allora se non il fenicio, essendo descendenti dei "Fenici." *Bres. Malta Antica.*

The learned prelate proves the Phœnician descent of the Maltese, and traces the remains of the Phœnician in their modern dialect.

the old Oscan[r] remained to a late period among the common people; Greek was the vernacular in that part originally called Magna Græcia, and was so generally understood by the upper classes, that dramatic exhibitions were represented in all the three languages[s]. Though the pride of Roman conquest endeavoured to establish

[r] Quintus Ennius tria corda habere sese dicebat, quod loqui Græce, et Osce, et Latine sciyit. *Aulus Gell.* XVII. 17.

Qui Osce et Volsce fabulantur, nam Latine nesciunt. *Titin. apud Festum.* lib. XIII.

In Italia stessa, centro e sede dei Romani, ove l'uso del Latino era in uso per publica autoritâ, mentre per le citta e par le provincie dai dotti, da publici e civili cittadini non si parlava altro linguaggio, non pote l'impero Romano impedire, che le provincie particulari usassero cotidianamente il dialetto proprio, che bene spesso discordava del altro. *De Rossi della Lingua di C.*

[s] Edidit (Cæsar) ludos etiam regionatim urbe tota, et quidem per omnium linguarum histriones. *Suet. Jul.* XXXIX.

Fecitque nonnunquam vicatim ac pluribus scenis per omnium linguarum histriones. *Suet. Aug.* XLIII.

Lege proposita, ut Romani Græco, Græci Romano habitu et sermone uterentur. *Ibid. Aug.*

Cicero however says, "Nostri Græce fere nesciunt, nec "Græci Latine." *Tusc. Quæst.* V. "Græca leguntur in "omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus, exiguis "sane, continentur." *Cic. pro Arch.* XXV.

Latin as the general language of public affairs in all the subject provinces[t], yet in

[t] Magistratus vero prisci quantopere suam populique Romani majestatem retinentes se gesserint, hinc cognosci potest, quod inter cætera obtinendæ gravitatis indicia, illud quoque magna cum perseverantia custodiebant, ne Græcis unquam, nisi Latine, responsa darent. Quinetiam ipsa linguæ volubilitate, qua plurimum valent, excussa, per interpretem loqui cogebant; non in urbe tantum nostra, sed etiam in Græcia et Asia: quo scilicet Latinæ vocis honos per omnes gentes venerabilior diffunderetur. *Val. Max.* lib. II. c. 2.

Causes however were sometimes pleaded in Greek in the senate. "Quis ergo huic consuetudini, qua nunc Græcis "actionibus aures curiæ exsurdantur, januam patefecit, "ut opinor, Molo rhetor, qui studia M. Ciceronis acuit. "Eum namque ante omnes exterarum gentium in senatu "sine interprete auditum constat." *Val. Max. ut supra.*

The emperors however appear rather to have condemned this practice. Augustus did not himself speak Greek fluently, "non tamen ut aut loqueretur expedite "aut componere aliquid auderet." *Suet. Aug.* Tiberius discouraged Greek, and apologized for using Greek words in the senate. "Militem quendam quoque Græce testi-"monium interrogatum, nisi Latine respondere vetuit." *Suet. Tib.* LXXI.

But he was not consistent by Dio's representation probably of the same transaction. Ἑκατοντάρχου Ἑλληνιστὶ ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ μαρτυρῆσαί τι ἐθελήσαντος, οὐκ ἠνέσχετο, καίπερ πολλὰς μὲν δίκας ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ ταύτῃ, καὶ ἐκεῖ λεγομένας ἀκούων, πολλὰς δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπερωτῶν. Dio Tib. LVII. 15.

Claudius was more severe; for though he granted as an especial privilege χάριν οἱ Ἑλληνιστὶ γνῶναι, Dio. LX.

the metropolis, the affectation [u] or the good taste of the literary and polished part of the community struggled hard with the national vanity. It was not till a much later period that the administration of public

8. nevertheless, "spectatissimum virum, Græciæque "provinciæ principem, verum Latini sermonis ignarum, "non modo albo judicis erasit, sed etiam in peregrinita- "tem redegit." *Suet. Claud.* Ἐπύθετο τῇ Λατίνων γλώσσῃ τῶν πρεσβευτῶν τινὸς, Λυκίου μὲν τὸ ἀρχαῖον ὄντος, Ῥωμαίου δὲ γεγονότος· καὶ αὐτὸν, ἐπειδὴ μὴ συνῆκε τὸ λεχθὲν, τὴν πολιτείαν ἀφείλετο, εἰπὼν μὴ δεῖν Ῥωμαῖον εἶναι, τὸν μὴ καὶ τὴν διάλεξιν σφῶν ἐπιστάμενον. Dio Claud. XVII.

The literary vanity of Nero predominated over his national pride; he pleaded and acted in both languages, "Pro Bononiensibus Latine, et pro Rhodiis et Iliensibus "Græce verba fecit."

St. Augustin says, "Romani data opera fecerunt, ut "imperiosa civitas non solum jugum, verum etiam lin- "guam suam domitis gentibus per pacem societatis im- "peraret." *De Civ. Dei* XIX. 7. They certainly succeeded at a later period in encroaching to a considerable extent upon the Greek; see quotations from Plutarch, &c. in Bayle, article *Claudius*; Gibbon, c. 1. note, and Casaubon, Exercit. IX. for a curious passage from Gregory Thaumaturgus, which shews that in his time Latin was better known than Greek at Berytus in Syria.

u Nunc natus infans delegatur Græculæ alicui ancillæ. *De Cl. Orat* .XXIX.

—— se non putat ulla
Formosam, nisi quæ de Tusca Græcula facta est.
Juv. VI. 184.

business in Latin, and the practice of the Roman law, forced the language of the ruling powers into more general circulation. Latin seems to have spread with the greatest rapidity in Gaul[x] and Spain[y], and lastly in Africa, where however the native dialects and the Punic[z] still kept their hold among the uneducated. In the Grecian colonies of Cyrene[a] we again find that lan-

[x] Strabo tells us that the different dialects of Gaul did not differ much. Τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς, Γαλατικὴν μὲν τὴν ὄψιν, ὁμογλώττους δὲ οὐ πάντας, ἀλλ' ἐνίους μικρὸν παραλλάττοντας ταῖς γλώτταις. Strabo IV. 267.

' Decimus Brutus spoke Celtic. Ἤλλαξε δὲ τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἐς τὸ Κελτικὸν, ἐξεπιστάμενος ἅμα καὶ τὴν φωνήν. App. III. 97.

About Marseilles, Greek had spread to a considerable extent. Ὥσθ' ἡ πόλις μικρῷ μὲν πρότερον τοῖς βαρβάροις ἀνεῖτο παιδευτήριον, καὶ φιλέλληνας κατεσκεύασε τοὺς Γαλάτας, ὥστε καὶ τὰ συμβόλαια Ἑλληνιστὶ γράφειν. Strabo IV. p. 273.

[y] One Spanish people had entirely forgotten their native language. Οἱ μέντοι Τουρδιτανοὶ, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ περὶ τὸν Βαῖτιν, τελέως εἰς τὸν Ῥωμαίων μεταβέβληνται τρόπον, οὐδὲ τῆς διαλέκτου τῆς σφετέρας ἔτι μεμνημένοι. Strabo III. p. 225.

[z] Apuleius of Madaura learnt Latin at Rome; his wife's son spoke only Punic. "Loquitur nunquam nisi "Punice, et si quid adhuc a matre Græcissat: Latine "enim neque vult neque potest." *Orat. pro Magia.*

All the African fathers wrote Latin; St. Augustin, according to Jortin, "had only a slender knowledge of the "Greek tongue." *Jortin, Dissert.* II.

[a] I presume some one of the languages spoken by Cleo-

guage, and in Alexandria even the Jews had become so completely Hellenised, that it is probable that the accomplished Philo did not understand the language of Palestine[b]. Indeed I suspect that the jealousy which existed between the Egyptian and native Jews, and which was inflamed by the building of the rival temple in Heliopolis, was not a little enhanced by this circumstance. While in the former the cultivation of Greek literature, and the universal adoption of the Greek language, softened the rigour of their unsocial prejudices, with the latter this liberality of the Alexandrians rather aggravated as well their dislike to their more polished neighbours, as their repugnance to all such denationalizing studies. Beyond Alexandria, Greek appears to have made no great progress, the Egyptian[c] was universally prevalent up to the

patra, (see note ° p. 203.) was that of the Libyans about Cyrene.

b See Mangey's Preface to Philo, who appears to confess his ignorance. Μαρὶν ἀποκαλούντων, οὕτως δέ φασι τὸν Κύριον ὀνομάζεσθαι παρὰ Σύροις.

c (See note ° p. 203.) Toutes les lectures se faisaient en langue vulgaire, c'est-à-dire la langue que parloient les

borders of Ethiopia [d]. While then we have no express authority for direct intercourse between the apostles and those who were ignorant of Greek, considering the extent of country over which they journeyed, the numerous people, especially in Asia Minor, which they visited, the fact that their teaching was chiefly oral, and that the converts were most numerous from the lower orders, it is impossible to question the utility of such a gift, if it pleased divine Providence to bestow it.

An objection however has been made by divines of great eminence, and indeed

honnêtes gens de chaque pays; car quoique la langue Punique fût encore en usage parmi le petit peuple d'Afrique du temps de St. Augustin, on ne voit pas que l'église s'en servit. Mais dans la Thébaïde il falloit que l'on fît les lectures en Egyptien, puis que St. Antoine, qui n'entendoit point autre langue, fut converti pour avoir oui l'évangile. (Vie de St. Ant.) *Fleury, Mœurs des Chrétiens*, p. 123.

The scriptures were early translated into Egyptian. *Chrys. Hom.* I. *in Joan. Theodoret. de Cur. Græc. Affect. Sen.*

[d] According to Heliodorus, the Æthiopian kings affected to talk Greek. Καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ἑλληνίζων, σπουδάζεται γὰρ ἤδε ἡ γλῶσσα καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Γυμνοσοφισταῖς καὶ βασιλεῦσιν Αἰθιόπων. Heliod. Æth. IX. 25.

the general current of theologic opinion appears to bear that way. The authority of the Acts is adduced to prove the Apostles' ignorance of the barbarous dialects of Asia Minor. If this be clearly the case, the inquiry, recently instituted, however interesting to the philologic student, ceases to demand the attention of the Christian divine. Before however I revert to the passage in question, I would observe, that this gift, of whatever nature it was, was bestowed in different degrees on different individuals. *I thank my God*, says St. Paul, *I speak with tongues more than ye all*[e]. If the gift were by no means universal, it would not therefore be proved not to have existed; though generally endowed with the faculty, the apostles might not be enabled to speak and understand the uncouth and barbarous jargon of every petty tribe which they might encounter. To proceed however to the affair in question. The apostles Paul and Barnabas having wrought a public and astonishing miracle at Lystra[f], the multitude of the city were so amazed,

[e] 1 Cor. xiv. 18. [f] Acts xiv.

that *they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* Preparations are then made to offer sacrifice, oxen and garlands are brought forth, and the priest of Jupiter is ready to perform his office. The apostles, according to the common exposition, seeing these things, understand for the first time their impious intentions, rush among them, expostulate with them, and indignantly reject the offered honours. But this, it is inferred, they would have done before, had they understood the Lycaonian dialect, in which they were first called by the names of Jupiter and Mercurius. This interpretation, originally, I believe, that of Chrysostom, is liable to a fatal objection. The expression in the text is not, when the apostles saw what was going on, but when they heard ἀκούσαντες. In the next place, if the apostles did not understand the Lycaonian, in what language had they taught the people, addressed the cripple whom they healed, and in what did they make their long and successful expostulation with the multitude? For they did

not simply express their abhorrence of the proffered adoration by visible signs of indignation, by their offended looks, and by the rending their garments; they did not remonstrate with the higher classes, and solicit their interference, but they rushed at once among the people, and argued with them on the grievous misapprehension into which they had fallen. Now is it probable that the mob of Lystra should so well understand one language and speak another; that the lowest inhabitants of a town neither maritime nor commercial should be so familiar with both languages, as to listen to one with pleasure on subjects so mysterious and profound as the principles of a new religion, and yet express themselves in a different one; that whatever their dialect or tongue, the apostles should not comprehend their brief and repeated outcry, but that they should fully understand the arguments and remonstrances of the apostles? Either the Lycaonian[g] was a dialect of Greek, or a lan-

[g] Grotius, Lightfoot, and Jablonski think this language Cappadocian; Bentley, very different from Greek; Guhlingius, a corrupt Greek dialect. *Crit. Sacr.* Stephanus Byzantinus quotes a word as Lycaonian.

guage entirely different; if the latter, the apostles must have addressed them miraculously in their native tongue; if the former, Paul and Barnabas, however perplexed by the peculiarity of their jargon or pronunciation, could scarcely have been ignorant of their general meaning. But in fact we have no warrant in the text for concluding that the apostles heard the outcry of the multitude. Such is the observation of Bentley[h], who is decided in rejecting the interpretation of Chrysostom. In truth, whatever exposition we adopt, a difficulty remains; it is not apparent why the writer should expressly mention their exclamation to have been in the Lycaonian language. It is not

[h] When I consider the circumstances and nature of the affair, I am persuaded they did not hear that discourse of the people. For I can hardly conceive, that men under such apprehensions as the Lystrans then were, in the dread presence, and under the very nod of the almighty Jupiter, not an idol of wood and stone, should exclaim in his sight and hearing. This, I say, seems not probable nor natural, nor is it affirmed in the text. But they might whisper it to one another, and silently withdrawing from the presence of the apostles, they then *lift up their voice*, and noised it about the city. *Bentley, Conf. of Atheism.*

altogether satisfactory to account for this on the supposition that there was something peculiarly striking in the language itself; or even that it was the first time that the apostles came in contact with any of these barbarous dialects. I do not indeed see, why an advocate for the universality of the gift of tongues might not draw an inference in favour of his own system, and conclude that the object of the evangelist was to shew that the apostles could converse familiarly among the most barbarous people, and where the Greek language was not vernacular. At all events, it is sufficient for my argument, that the passage furnishes no decisive proof that the apostles were ignorant of the Lycaonian language; or if they were, it was not of the slightest importance, because it is clear, both from their previous harangue and from their subsequent expostulation, that they spoke some language intelligible to the people of Lystra.

Some other passages in the sacred writings are also adduced by those who wish to limit, or absolutely deny the miracle in question. Arguing that Providence does not work

wonders of which the utility is not great and evident, they conclude that where the gift is named, and the object is not apparent, it must either be explained away, or considered, as by Ernesti, merely as an evidence of the divine power, meant to vindicate the mission of the apostles. Among these cases, the history of Cornelius is one[i]. We read that when the church of Christ was first opened to the Gentiles, and Cornelius with his kinsmen and near friends were accepted as Christian converts, *while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God*[k]. Here then at first sight appears no obvious utility in the miracle, yet, I conceive, if we consider more closely the importance of the transaction, we may be of a different opinion. In this great era, as I

[i] Acts x. [k] Acts x. 44—46

may justly call it, in the evangelic history, the first admission of Gentile converts into the pale of Christianity, the parties in the affair are Peter and his companions, whose native language was Syro-Chaldaic, and Cornelius with his kinsmen, who from his name, and as a Roman soldier of the Italian band, probably spoke Latin. They might indeed have met on the neutral ground of the Greek, which Peter even by natural means might have acquired, and which the family of Cornelius might have understood. But as it was of the utmost importance that a free and unrestrained intercourse should take place between the circumcised and uncircumcised converts, it would be difficult to find an occasion on which such an intervention of divine power, if it ever occurred, could more advantageously have been bestowed.

The second occasion on which this gift was conferred was the conversion of certain followers of John the Baptist. Now 1st, as these *had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost*[1], no demon-

[1] Acts xix. 2.

stration of the power and agency of the Spirit would be misplaced; and 2dly, as the followers of John the Baptist were widely scattered abroad, their conversion, wherever they might reside, or whatever language they might speak, would be greatly facilitated by the communication of this gift[m].

The strong hold, however, of the objectors is the remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians, in which certain Christians are rebuked for an ostentatious display of this gift; and St. Paul is thought to speak rather disparagingly of the gift itself, which, if what it is generally supposed, must rank among the most remarkable instances of almighty power. Warburton has anticipated the first of these objections by his acute distinction between this and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. "The speaking "with tongues, when once the gift was con"ferred, became from henceforth a natural "power; just as the free and perfect use of "the members of the body, after they have "been restored by miracle to the exercise

[m] On the followers of John the baptist, see Michaelis, and Rosenmuller, preface to St. John.

"of their natural functions. Indeed to "have lost the gift of tongues after the "temporary use of it, would imply another "miracle; for it must have been by actual "deprivation, unless we suppose the apo-"stles mere irrational organs, through which "divine sounds were conveyed. In a word, "it was as much in the course of nature, "for an apostle, whom the Holy Spirit on "the day of Pentecost had enabled, to speak "a strange language, as it was for the crip-"ple whom Jesus had restored to the use of "his limbs on the Sabbath day, to walk, "run, and perform all the functions of a "man perfectly sound and whole[n]."

As regards the second objection, from the remarkable expression of St. Paul, *I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues*[o], evidently, it is not the gift itself, but the gift, diverted from its real purpose of Christian edification, which is depreciated. The apostle does not mean that it is a less valuable or extraordi-

[n] Warburton, Doctrine of Grace.
[o] 1 Cor. xiv. 5.

nary, but under the present circumstances a less useful gift than others which he names. He was addressing professed believers; but *tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that believe* [p]. The manner in which the gift was abused is confessedly obscure; perhaps Lightfoot's conjecture is the most probable [q], that some of the Jewish converts made a display of their knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, all which was unintelligible to the generality of their hearers. I may suggest however, that though at first sight we might conclude Corinth to be the centre of pure and unmingled Greek, it is probable that the inhabitants were equally divided between Greek and Latin. It was a Roman colony [r] of

[p] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

[q] Lightfoot in loco, with whom lord Barrington (Miscellanea Sacra) coincides.

[r] Κόρινθον δὲ οἰκοῦσι Κορινθίων μὲν οὐδεὶς ἔτι τῶν ἀρχαίων, ἔποικοι δὲ ἀποσταλέντες ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων. Pausanias II. 1. Compare Diod. Sic. Fragment lib. XXXII. Strabo lib. VIII. p. 585. Dio Cassius XLIII. 50. My attention was directed to this fact by the Palæoromaica, one of those paradoxes, which ingenious men begin to support as an exercise of the

very recent date, and peopled directly from Italy. Now though of course it would be rapidly increased by the confluence of settlers from the neighbourhood, yet the Latin language was probably spoken by a large proportion of the inhabitants. But where the diversity of language permitted the use, it would also give occasion for the idle display of the gift of tongues.

It will have been observed, that the argument in this Lecture is directed against two distinct classes of opponents: 1st, those who, while they acknowledge the authority of the Scripture, reject the common opinion concerning the miracle of the gift of tongues. To these I urge its universal acceptance in its literal sense by the Christian church, the incredibility that it should have been invented, the still greater incredibility that it should have been fabricated by the ignorance of the early expositors of Scripture, out of proverbial expressions bearing no

reasoning powers, and end in almost persuading themselves that they are in earnest.

It may be worth remarking that the Latin names of Justus and Crispus appear among the Corinthian brethren, Acts xviii. 6. perhaps also Fortunatus, 1 Cor. xvi. 17.

such meaning; the obvious imitation of it by the biographers of false teachers, and its inestimable value to the apostles, as a means of disseminating the religion of Christ. To those, 2dly, whom I suppose either willingly, or compelled by force of reasoning, to admit the general truth of the leading facts in the apostolic history, I dwell only on the scene in Jerusalem upon the day of Pentecost. I strongly assert the impossibility, that without this gift the apostles could have made the impression which they did on the assembled multitude; that speaking in their native dialect they would have been unintelligible to the vast majority, and, instead of enforcing awe and amazement, would either have been entirely disregarded, or incurred contempt and ridicule.

I do not adduce as an argument, I remark only as a singular coincidence, the agreement of this miracle with the course of divine Providence as recorded in the Old Testament. The curse pronounced at Babel separated the human race into distinct nations; when mankind was to be invited to form one family in Christ, how admirably

adapted for the purpose the temporary suspension of this malediction [s]! The temporary suspension, because when the religion was established, resident teachers appointed, the Scriptures compiled and translated into various tongues, the progress of the religion demanded no further miraculous interference. But remarkable as the analogy is, the writers of the New Testament appear unconscious of it; whence it is evident that the later miracle is not an invention suggested by the former.

If tongues then were the credentials of the ambassadors of God; if from the reception of the apostles in this character we may infer the necessary production and verification of their powers, let us listen with humble gratitude to the terms of peace and reconciliation with God, offered on their authority, and may that peace be ours, both now and evermore [t]!

[s] Compare lord Barrington's Miscellanea Sacra, and Benson, Hist. of the planting of Christianity.

[t] It is remarkable that the Roman Catholic church has rarely laid claim to this miracle; the reason is obvious, the impossibility of imposture.

After Irenæus, there is hardly any mention made of

the gift of tongues in ecclesiastical history. One who hath written the life of Pachomius, a monk in the fourth century, says, among other things equally marvellous and equally credible, that the saint had received a power to speak all sorts of languages. See Bollandus and Tillemont. *Jortin, Eccles. Hist.* I. 318.

Chrysostom distinctly denies that the gift was known in his time. Διὰ τί τότε γλωσσαῖς ἐλαλοῦν πάντες οἱ βαπτιζομένοι, νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἔτι; vol. V. p. 606. edit. Sav. The whole passage, as relates to the miraculous powers claimed in those days, is very curious.

"Quis enim nunc hoc expectat, ut ii, quibus manus ad "accipiendum Spiritum Sanctum imponitur, repente inci-"piant linguis loqui." *August. de Bapt.* III. 16.

Xavier confessed this difficulty. "Faxit Deus ut ad "divinarum explicationem rerum linguam condiscamus "quamprimum; tum demum aliquam Christianæ rei "navabimus operam." Dr. Milner, in his End of Controversy, animadverting on Bishop Douglas's Criterion, contradicts this statement; but, instead of producing any extracts from Xavier's own writings, appeals to the overwhelming authority of the bull of his canonization. Bouhours, in his life of Xavier, (translated by Dryden,) finds himself in an awkward predicament, perpetually compelled to acknowledge the saint's ignorance of the native languages, but equally compelled to defer to the authority of his church, which has declared that he possessed the gift of tongues.

LECTURE VI.

1 Cor. i. 23.

But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock, to the Greeks foolishness.

SUPPOSE now, that flushed with their success, precarious and imperfect as it was, in their native country; having at the cost of incessant labour, and some actual suffering, and at the perpetual risk of their lives, converted some thousands of Jews and Samaritans, the apostles proceed to develope more completely their ambitious scheme of propagating their doctrines throughout the world. They have acquired two coadjutors of considerable importance, one Barnabas, a man of education and property, the other, Paul, however of unquestioned ability, odious to the Jews as an apostate, liable to suspicion among the Christians, as having been a persecutor. Where however do we trace

their earliest progress? in barbarous and uncivilized countries, where the ignorant, athirst, as it were, for wonders, are imposed upon by the shallowest pretender to supernatural power; where their manifest and acknowledged superiority in the useful arts secures them respect, if not veneration; where the morals were in a favourable state for the reception of their purer doctrines, and where the established religion was without attraction, and mingled little in the common details of life; where the sublime topics on which they argued, the nature of God, the immortality of the soul, the state of existence after death, never having been discussed, were as commanding from their novelty, as full of interest from their importance? on the scene selected for their labours did the laws secure, and the spirit of the people guarantee the toleration of men preaching such a religion? lastly, if they chose the more enlightened regions of the world, did they work in obscurity among the lowest orders; shun publicity; steal from family to family, "leading captive silly women;" avoid every occasion

of confronting the reasoning and intelligent part of the community; shrink from detection, and dread the possibility of confutation? We find them in luxurious Antioch, in dissolute Corinth, among the philosophers of Athens, the proud, ferocious, and unprincipled aristocracy of Rome. We hear them discoursing in the open synagogues, pleading before Agrippa and the Roman governor of Judæa; desirous of attacking idolatry in its head quarters, in the theatre at Ephesus, arguing with equal intrepidity in the enlightened Areopagus. We see them daring, defying, enduring the persecution of the inflamed populace, dragged before the judgment seat of the public authorities, appealing to Cæsar himself. We find them making converts on the tribunal of government in the case of Sergius Paulus; leading disciples from the camp of philosophy, in the person of Dionysius the Areopagite.

But, it may be objected, the world was in so favourable a state for the reception of a new religion; the old superstitions were so entirely worn out, that the inbred neces-

sity of intercourse with the immaterial world, inseparable from the nature of man, in other words, the religious wants of human kind, imperiously demanded some new and powerful excitement. Is it wonderful then, that a system of doctrine so simple, yet so sublime, which united the better parts of the Grecian philosophy with the lofty Jewish tenet of the unity of God, addressed in any manner to minds in this darkling and unsatisfactory state, should make rapid and unresisted progress? Add to all this, the state of the world; the dispersion of the Jews in all quarters; the extent of the Greek language; the universal dominion of the Romans, and the gradual extension of civilization. When therefore the doctrines of Christianity were advocated by men of pure and unexceptionable morals; when they boldly asserted the certainty of those sublime and welcome tenets, the life to come, and the immortality of the soul, far from being surprised at the rapid advancement of Christianity, we may be inclined to ascribe it to the natural progress of human opinion.

I wave for the present the obvious difficulty, that even if this view will account for the success of the apostles, it leaves the attempt as inexplicable as before: unless we suppose them endowed with such sagacity and foresight, as deliberately to have calculated on all these contingent advantages, and, having thus surveyed the country, where their campaign was to be conducted, to have laid down the whole matured plan of conquest. With this caution, the Christian advocate distinctly admits the cooperation of these secondary causes, though, drawing a different conclusion, he argues, that together they appear to designate the appointed period of the promised Messiah, *the fulness of time*, when the Redeemer was to be born into a world thus prepared for his reception. But while he acknowledges their concurrent assistance, he denies their sufficiency, either to account for the origination of such a faith, or to secure its success, supposing the system of Christian opinions casually struck out by the sagacity of its one or many teachers.

Indeed nothing appears more extraor-

dinary in the whole history of the Gospel, than the remarkable harmony and coincidence of what may be called the mediate and immediate interference of the Deity. It is partly by the influence of predisposed human means, partly by direct interpositions of divine power, that the new religion is disseminated. We discern the hand of Providence in both. The whole course of human events seems to a certain degree controlled and superintended, in order to prepare a way for the teachers of the Gospel. All worldly affairs conspire with singular and unaccountable uniformity to this end. But yet much is wanting. The wheels are prepared, but the machine must be set in motion by some extraneous power. To overcome the first resistance, and break down the strong impediments which remain, a vigorous and decisive impulse is required, which can be traced to no other than that which sent the planets on their journey through the abyss of space, the one Great Mover of the material universe. For on closer investigation, this prearrangement of the world for the reception of a new reli-

gion was not merely insufficient to account for its origin and success, but was counteracted and counterbalanced by impediments arising out of the same constitution of human affairs, partly out of concurrent circumstances, but chiefly out of the inadequacy of the human means employed for the purpose. Discarding Providence, if I may so speak, from this previous general administration of the world; leaving the great drama of history to human passions alone, neither directed nor overruled by the presiding Deity; taking the world as it existed at the period when Christianity appeared; conceding that the Jews spread abroad merely in consequence of their national character, or the circumstances of their history; that the extension of the Greek language resulted solely from the successful ambition of Alexander, the universal peace from the judicious policy of the Romans; let us send forth these men into the world, with no credentials but those of dexterous imposture, or the fanatic adoption of certain doctrines, of which they had no other testimony to produce, but the

intrepidity of their own assertions; and having so done, fairly balance the advantages and disadvantages arising from the existing state of society.

1. Among those remarkable circumstances which appear to the unbeliever fortuitous, to the Christian a signal evidence of the predestined purpose of the Almighty, but which is acknowledged on both sides to have contributed to the progress of Christianity, the dispersion of the Jews demands our earliest attention. Philosophically considered, no problem in the political history of mankind is more curious, than the coexistence of this singular people with every nation, without their abandoning in the least their hereditary distinctions. Almost all other migratory tribes either entirely supersede, or gradually melt into the mass of the people among which they settle; they imbibe insensibly foreign habits, customs, opinions, laws, even religion; the difference of manners, language, in some instances, of features and complexion, wears out by degrees; intermarriages connect the whole into one society, and every gene-

ration tends to diminish both the physical and moral differences of the people. The Jews remain perpetually separate and distinct; however completely denationalized as to their place of birth, they are never so in customs or character; they mingle in many of the transactions of life, but are never incorporated with the society around them; if, as in the case of the Alexandrian Jews, their habits and studies undergo a partial change, the more striking lineaments of their national character remain uneffaced. But to whatever cause we ascribe this peculiarity in the history of the Jewish people, the fact, that, at the time of the apostles, they were spread throughout the world, is undeniable[a]. During their whole later history, their migratory habits had been fostered and encouraged by many concurrent causes. In war they were swept into captivity by thousands, in peace they

[a] Αὕτη δ' εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν ἤδη παρεληλύθει, καὶ τόπον οὐκ ἔστι ῥᾳδίως εὑρεῖν τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὃς οὐ παραδέδεκται τοῦτο τὸ φῦλον, μηδ' ἐπικρατεῖται ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. Strabo apud Josephum, Ant. XIV. 7. 2. Compare Philo. Letter of Agrippa in the Leg. ad Caium, where he enumerates the nations among which they had spread; also Joseph. B. J. II. 16.

dispersed of their own accord, probably with[b] commercial views. In Mesopotamia and the adjacent districts, to say nothing as to the uncertain fate of the ten tribes, numerous families remained after the captivity, who perpetuated the Jewish race and religion. At all events, whether from these causes, or subsequent migrations, their number was so considerable, that Philo, probably with some rhetorical amplification[c], asserts that a general insurrection of the Jews might have endangered the Roman empire[d]. In Egypt, particularly at Alexan-

[b] An interesting discussion might be written on the origin of the mercantile habits and trade of the Jews. They appear to have been lenders upon pledge in Alexandria. Τὰς μὲν ἐνθήκας ἀπολωλεκότων τῶν ποριστῶν. Philo in Flacc. p 525. A Jew merchant plays a conspicuous part in the curious story of the conversion of Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, to Judaism. in Joseph Ant XX. 2. See Rosenmuller's note on Acts ix. 2. and Michaelis, vol. IV p. 61. Justin says they traded in opobalsamum.

[c] Ἤδει γὰρ Βαβυλῶνα καὶ πολλὰς ἄλλας τῶν Σατραπειῶν ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων κατεχομένας. Philo, Leg. ad Caium, vol. II. p. 578. ed. Man

[d] Τοσαύτας μυριάδας ἐφελκέσθαι πολεμίων ἆρ' οὐ σφαλερώτατον; ἀλλὰ μή ποτε γένοιτο συμφρονήσαντας τοὺς ἑκασταχοῦ πρὸς ἄμυναν ἐλθεῖν; ἄμαχόν τι συμβήσεται χρῆμα. Philo, p. 577.

Petronius at least appears to have dreaded their union with the powers beyond the Euphrates. Philo, ut supra.

dria, their population was easily ascertained and accounted for. In the dangerous position of Judæa between the rival kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, neutrality was impossible. Two years after the death of Alexander, Ptolemy took Jerusalem, and transported thirty thousand Jews to Egypt[e]. Under his successors, with whom the Jews were more frequently allied, they were perpetually driven to seek an asylum in the same country from the oppressions of the Syrian kings. In short, as the fortune of war prevailed, and the party, with which they sided, triumphed or was defeated, they fled for refuge, or were sold into slavery at Antioch or Alexandria. So great indeed was their concourse in Egypt, that they at length excited the jealousy of the mother country, by building a rival temple. They had their own magistrates, called Alabarchæ[f]; sometimes, as in the case of Megabulus[g], attained to the command of armies; and what is still more extraordinary, form-

[e] Joseph. Ant. XII. 1. Prideaux, Conn. I. 8.
[f] Philo in Flaccum. [g] Prideaux.

ed a school of Greek literature, from which probably the Septuagint translation of the scriptures proceeded, and of which the works of Philo are no contemptible specimen. It is difficult to suppose but that there is an error, an hyperbole, or a false reading, in the numbers assigned by this author to his Egyptian brethren, which he states at ten millions[h]. From Egypt the Jews had spread in great numbers into Libya and the neighbourhood of Cyrene; and it appears from the history of the eunuch in the Acts, that they had extended into Ethiopia. We have incidental notice, that they resided in great numbers throughout Syria[i], Asia Minor, the Greek islands, Macedonia, and the rest of Greece. In Antioch and other cities they had splendid syn-

[h] Ἐπιστάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἡ πόλις οἰκήτορας ἔχει διττούς, ἡμᾶς τε καὶ τούτους, καὶ πᾶσα Αἴγυπτος, καὶ ὅτι οὐκ ἀποδέουσι μυριάδων ἑκατὸν οἱ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν καὶ τὴν χώραν Ἰουδαῖοι κατοικοῦντες, ἀπὸ τοῦ πρὸς Λιβύην καταβαθμοῦ μέχρι τῶν ὁρίων Αἰθιοπίας. Philo in Flacc p. 523.

[i] Τὸ γὰρ Ἰουδαίων γένος πολὺ μὲν κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην παρέσπαρται τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις πλεῖστον δὲ τῇ Συρίᾳ κατὰ τὴν γειτνίασιν ἀναμεμιγμένον. Joseph. B. J. VII. 9.

agogues; in short, Dio Cassius asserts, that through the whole of the Roman empire this persecuted people had increased with such rapidity, as to extort the toleration of their worship from their unwilling masters[k]. In Rome itself they were of such importance, that their marked regret for the death of Cæsar (easily accounted for, both from their hatred to the memory of their conqueror Pompey, and the edicts passed in their favour by his rival) is particularly noticed by his biographer[l]. They had their places of worship:

Hic sacri fontis nemus, et delubra locantur
Judæis, quorum cophinus, fœnumque supellex[m].

They were not only tolerated, but protected by Augustus[n], shared in the general largess of corn; and Philo states, that if the distribution took place on the sabbath, their portion was reserved. It is impossible then

[k] Καὶ ἔστι καὶ παρὰ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις τὸ γένος τοῦτο, κολουσθὲν μὲν πολλάκις, αὐξηθὲν δὲ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον, ὥστε καὶ ἐς παῤῥησίαν τῆς νομίσεως ἐκνικῆσαι. Dio Cass. XXXVII. 17.

[l] Suet. Julius 84.

[m] Juv. III. 13.

[n] See for the Decree of Augustus Joseph. Ant. XVI. 6. 2. Philo Leg. in Caium, p. 569.

to deny the great advantage which the early Christian teachers derived, from having those of their own nation and kindred, upon whose hospitable reception they might calculate on their first entrance into a foreign city [o]; from finding open synagogues and places of public assembly, in which they might announce their doctrines; in sheltering themselves under the general habits of their people from the surprise or suspicion which their itinerancy might otherwise have excited, or the animosity which their unsocial religion, which refused to coalesce with other kinds of worship, might have provoked. As a sect of Judaism, Christianity was enabled to gain some strength, before it encountered direct persecution. Still, however, the value of these advantages depended on two material points: 1st, the estimation in which the Jews were held. For coming before the world, avowedly associated with the Jews, grounding their

[o] Per illam tam ample patentem Judæorum in tot regionibus frequentiam et facilior aditus datus apostolis, atque vaticiniis prophetarum prænunciata evangelii lux felicius eminere, et longius aciem suam proferre potuit. *Fabric. Lux Evang.* c. 5.

doctrines on Hebrew records and traditions, they would share in the respect or contempt, the favour or the hatred, in which that people was held. 2dly, On their reception among the Jews; for if disclaimed by their own brethren, they would appear in the questionable predicament of being despised by the heathen as Jews, and detested by the Jews as apostates.

Now it is certain that the toleration of the Jews, which was the policy of Augustus, and in the early part of his reign of Tiberius[p], soon gave place to animosity which affected to assume the dignity of contempt. Although at an earlier period Cicero spoke of them with scorn[q], and when they are mentioned in the Augustan age, their habits and rites provoked the sarcasm of the wits[r], I think that I discover in subsequent writers increased acrimony even in their

[p] Suet. Tiberius. XXXV.

[q] Huic autem barbaræ superstitioni resistere, severitatis; multitudinem Judæorum, flagrantem nonnunquam in concionibus, pro republica contemnere, gravitatis summæ fuit. *Cic. pro Flacco*, 28.

[r] Hor. Sat. I. 9. 70. I. 5. 100.

brief notices of this unpopular race[s]. All their later history shews them in collision with the Roman authorities, and their irreconcileable intolerance, the better it became known, appeared only the more odious. The resistance to Caligula's frantic design of placing his statue in the temple, however impolitic the measure might appear to the wise and moderate, was likely nevertheless to wound the pride of Rome. Insurrection provoked oppression, oppression inflamed insurrection, till the final capture of Jerusalem, when with that union of savage animosity with contempt, which characterizes

[s] Juv. Sat. VI. 543. XIV. 101–4. Josephus says, just before the war, τὸ δὲ κατὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων πᾶσιν ἤκμαζε μῖσος. B. J. VII. 2. "Cætera instituta sinistra, fœda, pravitate "valuere." *Tac. H.* V. 5. "fœtent Quod jejunia sabba"tariorum." Mart. IV. 4. 7.

Martial likewise describes them as pedlars in the lowest state of poverty, changing matches for broken glass.

> Hic quod Transtiberinus ambulator,
> Qui pallentia sulfurata fractis
> Permutat vitreis. I. 42.
>
> A matre doctus nec rogare Judæus,
> Nec sulfuratæ lippus institor mercis. XII. 57.

They enjoyed a short interval of doubtful protection under Claudius. Joseph. Ant. XIX. 52. and Lardner's Credibility, I. 98.

all the conduct of the Romans towards the Jews, neither Vespasian nor Titus would condescend to the title of Judaicus[t]. But all these wars let loose throughout the empire immense numbers of captives, generally the worst, the most ferocious and dissolute of the people, who naturally tended still further to lower the estimation in which the whole race was held. Another strong confirmation of the unpopularity of the Jews is the facility with which, especially in [u]Syria, Egypt, and Cyrene, the populace were excited to persecute them. By some fatal and inalienable faculty of exciting odium, this devoted people were attacked with a sanguinary ferocity, scarcely surpassed by the fanatic persecutions of the dark ages. The record of the number massacred is our chief evidence to the extent of their population in many parts. In Scythopolis and Damascus[v] all the resident Jews were put

[t] Dio Cassius. Vespas. c. 7.

[u] Josephi Vita, et B. J. II. 18. Basnage has drawn out the numbers slain in Syria, as well as in Palestine during the war. *Hist. des Juifs*, l. I. c. 19.

[v] Joseph. ut supra. Also Philo in Flaccum.

to the sword; and in other places, whenever the protection of the Roman laws was withdrawn, whether from envy of their wealth, the hope of plunder, or personal hostility, the most relentless and exterminating massacre took place. But the apostles would hardly escape the odium of this execrable superstition, which the wider it spread, appears to have been more cordially detested; and the indiscriminate sword of persecution would make no difference between Jew and Christian, who alike refused to admit the gods of the heathen to an intercommunity with their own, or to allow their own to be degraded by an unholy fellowship with deities of wood and stone. We may fairly then conclude, that the progress of Christianity was no less retarded than advanced by its connection with Judaism among the Gentiles [x]; and unless it was cordially and generally received by the Jews, we shall be

[x] Ποίαις δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως ὑποβληθεῖεν τιμωρίαις, οἱ τῶν μὲν πατρίων φυγάδες, τῶν δ' ὀθνείων καὶ παρὰ πᾶσι διαβεβλημένων Ἰουδαικῶν μυθολογημάτων γενόμενοι ζηλωταί; πῶς δ' οὐ μοχθηρίας εἶναι καὶ εὐχερείας ἐσχάτης τὸ μεταθέσθαι μὲν εὐκόλως τὰ τῶν οἰκείων, ἀλόγῳ δὲ καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ πίστει τὰ τῶν δυσσεβῶν καὶ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν πολεμίων ἑλέσθαι. *Euseb. Præp. Ev.* I 2.

still more inclined to wonder at its rapid propagation. But every chapter in the later part of the Acts shews the blind jealousy with which the Jews in general resisted this innovation on their faith. Instead of receiving the apostles with open arms, and supporting them by their testimony, when they appeal to their Scriptures, they disavow them, oppose them with the utmost virulence, eject them from their synagogues, pursue them from city to city. This the apostles must have anticipated. They knew their countrymen too well to expect much favour at their hands. That the Jews should *demand a sign* was but natural. Their law had been delivered among signs and wonders. Their history was a perpetual prodigy. Unless then the new teachers should accredit their arguments with well attested miracles, or adduce satisfactory evidence of that greatest miracle, the resurrection, instead of meeting with partial success, they could scarcely hope for a patient hearing. If they rested their claim to belief on the fact of Christ's resurrection, the farther they removed from Jerusalem, and the

wider they separated, the more obscure and dubious the evidence of that fact became[y]. While together, they furnished a formidable body of eyewitnesses, singly, they could lay far less claim to belief: and Paul indeed could not pretend to this title to credibility. Of Christ's resurrection he knew nothing, except by revelation, and that, if unavouched by miracles, rested on his own assertion. He could not disavow, that he himself on the spot up to a certain period, had seen no reason to credit the miracles of Jesus. Nor could the apostles deny that Christ had been rejected by the vast majority of the nation, and condemned by the constituted authorities. It was no less unquestionable, that the greater part of the people, the au-

y The apostles, unlike to confederated impostors, did not keep in a body, to aid and support each other, but separated themselves to the distant corners of the earth; a conduct this, which, as it was necessary in order to propagate their religion, would have been the height of folly, had their religion been built on fraud and forgery. By separating in this manner, a scheme of fraud must have dwindled to nothing; no regular plan could be pursued, no unity of design could have subsisted, no community of interests have been preserved, &c. *Bishop Douglas's Criterion*, p. 358.

thorities included, had refused to believe the resurrection. Without miracles then, the apostles could scarcely have made any converts; even with miracles they would encounter with but partial success this inveterate and obstinate hostility. For while they demanded signs and wonders, it was not probable that the Jews would be converted by them, any more than their countrymen by those of Jesus. They had the same confidence in God's favour, as children of Abraham; the same certainty, that if there was a heaven, it was reserved by a rigid and exclusive decree for the circumcised people[z]. They had the same evasion, that of attributing to magic, *to Beelzebub the prince of the devils*, the wonderful works of which they could not contest the reality. Now look to the facts of the history. At

[z] Hoc scias, quod sæculum venturum non sit factum, nisi pro justis, nempe Israelitis, qui in hac vita neque plenam remunerationem, neque plenam ultionem accipere possunt. *Massech. Jevamoth.* c. 4. Dicunt ipsi, hoc scias, quod sæculum futurum non reconditur, nisi justis, qui sunt Israelitæ. *Maim.* num. 4. and 5. quoted in *Slevogt. de Proselytis.*

Other quotations to this effect may be found in Jortin. Disc. I. p. 25. and in Horne's Introduction v. III. p. 73.

Damascus, *after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill Paul*[a]. When Herod *had killed James the brother of John with the sword, because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also*[b]. At Antioch in Pisidia, *the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts*[c]. In Iconium and Lystra they were equally active; and *there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead*[d]. At Thessalonica the Jews [e] *set all the city in an uproar*, followed them to Berea, and there also *stirred up the people*. At Corinth, *they opposed themselves and blasphemed*, so that Paul solemnly abandoned all connection with them; *Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles*[f]. But the extravagance of

[a] Acts ix. 23. [b] Acts xii. 2, 3. [c] Acts xiii. 50.
[d] Acts xiv. 5—19. [e] Acts xvii. 5—13.
[f] Acts xviii. 6.

this determination is incredible. Unless supported by actual miracles, the Messiahship of Jesus rested on no evidence, except its conformity with the Jewish Scriptures. Of these the Gentiles knew nothing, the proselytes little. Their phraseology, their history, their prophecies, their types, were alike strange and unintelligible[g]. To the Jews, they might *reason out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead*[h]; but Scriptures, Jesus, and Christ, were unknown and unmeaning words to the heathen. Thus, while they would necessarily share in all the odium which attached to the Jewish name and religion, they appeared before the Gentiles under the still more dubious character of renegades from the faith in which they had been born, loudly denounced by the Jews

[g] The originality of the Christian doctrines and character is urged in a most attractive and convincing manner by my friend Mr. Sumner, in his volume on the Evidence of Christianity, a work, of which the argument in some points runs parallel with mine, but which left much the larger part of my ground entirely unoccupied.

[h] Acts xvii. 2, 3.

as impostors or fanatics, disclaimed by those who alone were capable of deciding with justice on their pretensions. Thus far as to the advantages of their connection with the Jewish people.

Suppose however, II. that they are neither disheartened by the uniform opposition of the Jews, and that they have contrived to reconcile the Gentiles both to their persons as descended from that hateful race, and to their still more questionable apostasy from the religion of their countrymen, let us follow them into the Gentile world, and examine its fitness for the reception of Christianity. The question of the extent and probable limits of the Greek language having already been discussed, let us inquire how far the subjugation of the western world to the dominion of the Romans might advance or retard the progress of the new religion. Had the apostles gone forth at any previous period, either of foreign or civil warfare, *the messengers of peace* would have been perpetually liable to interruption or danger, to be cut off by the indiscriminate ravager, or seized, and sold into cap-

tivity [1]. Besides this, during the apprehensions and anxieties excited by a state of civil discord, when the sword of proscription was suspended over the heads of all the higher orders by the slenderest thread, which might be snapt in an instant by the caprice of any one of either triumvirate; when the dwellings of the lower orders were alternately depopulated by successive armies, the quiet, unworldly, and persuasive voice of religion would scarcely have commanded attention. All interest would have been absorbed in more pressing and urgent concerns. Now, however, that the able policy of the Romans had established an uniform system of government throughout the empire, the public mind, no longer preoccupied by the agitations of war and faction, and precluded from political discussions, would welcome any excitement, and take

[1] Ἀνέτειλε γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ δικαιοσύνη, καὶ πλῆθος εἰρήνης γέγονεν, ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ, εὐτρεπίζοντος τοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔθνη, ἵν' ὑπὸ ἕνα γένηται τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλέα· καὶ μὴ διὰ τὸ προφάσει τῶν πολλῶν βασιλειῶν ἄμικτον τῶν ἐθνῶν πρὸς ἄλληλα, χαλεπώτερον γένηται τοῖς ἀποστόλοις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὸ ποιῆσαι ὅπερ προσέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς. Orig. cont. Cels. II. 30.

an interest in any speculations, attractive either from their boldness or novelty. The teachers of Christianity could pursue their itinerant system of proselytism in security. The prophecy of Isaiah, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight*[k], might almost be taken literally. The public roads were magnificent; the means of communication easy; the passage from one province to another without obstacle. Still there is much to counterbalance these advantages. In times of public confusion the doctrines of Christianity might have crept abroad, if less rapidly, more imperceptibly. The whole attention of the government was directed to civil affairs. An uniform and active police watched every invasion of the public quiet[l]. The facility of commu-

[k] Matt. iii. 2.

[l] It appears from a curious passage in Petronius Arbiter, that the regulation common in modern times, particularly in Italy, that all strangers are to be reported to the police, is as old as the days of Nero. "Hac voce "perterritus, eo egresso ad sciendum quid esset, descendi; "accepique, Prætoris lictorem, qui pro officio curabat ex-"terorum nomina inscribi in publicis codicibus, duos vi-"disse advenas domum ingredi, quorum nomina nondum

nication increased the facility of persecution. Where the different provinces and cities were independent of each other, the advice, *when they persecute you in one city, flee unto another*, would have been more practicable. Now, the reputation of being factious and quarrelsome persons, disturbers of the public peace, would fly before them, and pursue them every where. They could not escape observation, however they might shelter themselves under the contempt of the ruling power, for the Acts of the different cities appear to have been kept with punctuality, and transmitted regularly to the seat of government [m]. The universal empire of the Romans endangered an universal persecution. If they should once provoke the slumbering intolerance of their masters, a single edict from the Capitol

"in acta tetulerat, et ideirco de illorum patria et occupa-"tione inquirere." *Petr. Arb. Satyr.*

The imperial jealousy of ἑταιρεῖαι reminds us forcibly of the suspicion in which all secret associations are held at the present day. See quotations on this subject in Jortin, Disc. I.

[m] See Pearson on the Creed; note on art. IV. and Suetonius Grævii, note on Jul. XX. Tacitus mentions the *diurna populi Romani* Ann. XVI. 22.

would kindle the fires of extermination in every province of the West. The appeal of Paul to Cæsar was in fact a most dangerous experiment [n]. It exposed the whole body to the caprice of the tyrant, or the jealousy of the politician. It provoked his cognizance of a people, avowedly hostile to all existing modes of worship, which, as Gibbon observes, were considered by the legislator, as all equally useful. It therefore implied an intrepid reliance on the goodness of his cause, inexplicable at least in an impostor. The apostles might have been ignorant of those intolerant laws which forbade the unauthorized introduction of a new religion, and which in practice had become obsolete. They might have calculated on the inoffensive character of their religion, and been lulled into security by the temperate conduct of the judges before whom they were led—Gallio for instance, or the town clerk of Ephesus [o]. But

[n] Lardner is of opinion, that Paul did actually plead before Nero; but it seems to me highly improbable. *Hist. of Apost.*

[o] On the tolerance of the heathens see Bentley on Freethinking, c. 41. and especially bishop Warburton's masterly view of the subject. *Div. Leg.* b. II. c. 6. The

experience must soon have convinced them, that there was no security against the exasperated populace; and it must have occurred to men whose foresight we can scarcely question, that their prosperity would inevitably excite the more active jealousy of those, whose tolerance was only grounded on their contempt. Yet, on the whole, as far as the apostles were concerned, the advantages of the universal Roman dominion probably predominated; though they were advantages on which they could not fairly reckon, if they sate down deliberately to *count the cost* of their undertaking; and which were so precarious, and so often turned against them, as to induce them rather to recede in time, than to advance without hesitation.

III. The ancient religions, it may be said, had lost their hold on the general belief; the progress of letters and philosophy had enlightened the public mind to such an extent, that the fables of pagan mythology

laws on the subject may be seen, briefly in Jortin's Discourses, more at length in Chr. Kortholt, Paganus obtrectator.

were generally derided. The absurdity of the heathen worship had become apparent to the meanest understanding. Christianity therefore appearing at this fortunate juncture, took advantage of the religious propensities of human nature, now no longer preoccupied; and easily planted in the vacant heart of man those consolatory and ennobling principles of faith, the excellence of which, and their superiority to the degrading systems of prevailing belief, might appear sufficient evidence of their truth.

But, although we have sufficient proof that the philosophy of the Stoics, Academics, or Epicureans had superseded the exploded religions in the higher classes, it is not so easy to decide how low in society this scepticism had descended. We derive our knowledge of ancient opinions chiefly from poets, orators, or philosophers. But even though Cicero might publicly deride, or privately question the reality of a future state [p]; though Lucan [q] might disdain, or

[p] Cic. pro Cluent. c. 61. and the speech of Cæsar in Sallust, B. C. 50.

[q] Lucan IX. 379. Juv. II. 149.

Juvenal sarcastically depreciate the established faith, we cannot conclude that the superstitions of the mass of the people were not still deeply and firmly rooted[r]. Perhaps the moral and religious state of the world may be thus not unfairly stated. In the higher orders, a sovereign contempt for the creed of their forefathers, with a total absence of religious principle; theoretical Epicureanism with practical profligacy. In the lower, equal vice and ferocity of character[s], with an extravagant attachment to their local deities[t]. In both, a su-

[r] Et sciunt qui rerum humanarum non ignari sunt, etiam infimæ sortis homines non modo se suamque vitam et commoda naturæ instinctu amare, verum etiam consuetudines religionesque a majoribus acceptas multo vehementius et acrius complecti et custodire, quam homines ingenio, auctoritate, vitæque bonis præditos et excelso loco positos. *Mosheim de Reb. Chr.* I. 21. Compare likewise the note on this passage.

[s] Item flagitiosissime et prorsus impie supremi, mediocres, infimi vivebant, illorumque scelerum et criminum, quorum hodie nomen vix honestæ aures ferunt, maxima erat impunitas, &c. *Mosheim*, p. 15.

[t] See the curious discussion about the right of asylum, and the pertinacity with which the several cities urged the claims of their respective deities. *Tact Ann.* III. 61.

perstitious belief in magic, astrology, necromancy, divination; incredulity as to the substance, the moral restraint, and obedience to duty, with an obstinate fondness, either from policy or prejudice, for the established form of religion [u]. If, according to Warburton's theory, more elevated doctrines were taught in the mysteries, the secrecy of these had become depraved to the worst purposes. The priesthood in the various cities were sometimes opulent, always powerful; and the ceremonial of the heathen was most skilfully enwoven with the whole detail of life. If the religion of the Hindoo be more completely identified with the minutest circumstances of hourly practice, the food, the ablutions, the distinction of ranks, that of the Greeks was as completely incorporated with their pleasures, that of the Romans with their national pride. Every thing on which the

[u] Prodigies are as frequent in Tacitus as in Livy. The former describes Rome as "civitatem cuncta interpre-"tantem." Apuleius, Petronius, the satirists, and all the authors who throw light on the common life of the Romans, are full of their superstitions.

Greek rested his claim to superiority over barbarous nations; every thing by which the Roman vindicated his political and military preeminence was indissolubly connected with, or rather an integral part of the ancient faith. As to the latter, even in the time of Augustin, the feeling which he seems to combat with the greatest energy, is the ingratitude of deserting those gods under whose superintending providence Rome had attained to universal dominion[x]. With the Greeks, the language, the poetry, the arts, sculpture, painting, architecture, the spectacles of almost every description, were essentially religious. The abandonment of all these was the first inexorable demand of the new religion. Besides the total moral change, a revolution as complete in the occupations, amusements, and habits of life was imperiously required.

x ———sunt qui nobis bella exprobrare sinistra
Non dubitent, postquam templorum sprevimus aras,
Affirmentque, Libyn Collinæ a cardine portæ
Hannibalem Jovis imperio, Martisque, repulsum;
Victores Senonas Capitolî ex æde fugatos,
Cum super e celso pugnarent Numina saxo.
Prudent. contr. Symm. II. 683.

The glowing description of the manner in which the heathen ceremonial pervaded the whole life, adorned every hour, mingled with every serious pursuit, and exhilarated with its festive influence every pastime, as it appears in the History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, is well known[y]. But this opportunity of displaying the luxuriance of his diction, and the copiousness of his knowledge, is fatal to the theory which the writer would insinuate—the propagation of Christianity by natural causes alone. For if the old religion, conjured up by the powers of the imagination, could so fascinate the congenial mind of the historian, what must have been its influence, when incorporated with all the prejudices, inculcated with traditionary reverence, and addressed directly and perpetually to the ardent passions of a gay and dissolute people. No topic of Christian evidence has been urged with greater frequency or success, than the contrast between the mean, indigent, unpretending and selfdenying reli-

[y] Gibbon, Hist. c. XV.

gion of the cross, and the splendour, opulence, the festive and indulgent ritual of paganism [a]. I shall endeavour therefore to throw the argument into another form, both that I may avoid dangerous competition, and, as I conceive, bring the state of affairs more immediately home to the comprehension.

Conceive then the apostles of Jesus Christ, the tentmaker or the fisherman, entering, as strangers, into one of the splendid cities of Syria, Asia Minor, or Greece. Conceive them, I mean, as unendowed with miraculous powers, having adopted their itinerant system of teaching from human motives, and for human purposes alone. As they pass along to the remote and obscure quarter, where they expect to meet with precarious hospitality among their countrymen, they survey the strength of the

[a] It may be interesting to trace the manner in which the great masters of English pulpit eloquence have treated the same subject: compare a passage in J. Taylor's Sermon on the Death of Abp. Bramhall; Barrow, vol. IV. 471. Oxford ed.; and Atterbury's third Sermon. Dr. Campbell's Sermon, printed at the end of his Essay on Miracles, and Bp. Watson's "Christianity no Imposture," may be consulted.

established religion, which it is their avowed purpose to overthrow. Every where they behold temples, on which the utmost extravagance of expenditure has been lavished by succeeding generations; idols of the most exquisite workmanship, to which, even if the religious feeling of adoration is enfeebled, the people are strongly attached by national or local vanity. They meet processions, in which the idle find perpetual occupation, the young excitement, the voluptuous a continual stimulant to their passions. They behold a priesthood, numerous, sometimes wealthy; nor are these alone wedded by interest to the established faith; many of the trades, like those of the makers of silver shrines in Ephesus, are pledged to the support of that to which they owe their maintenance [a]. They pass a

[a] Publicus porro et privatus tot numinum cultus immensam pontificum, sacerdotum, augurum, haruspicum, aliorumque inferioris ordinis ministrorum multitudinem non commode tantum et laute alebat, verum etiam in magna existimitatione et auctoritate apud populos collocabat. . . . . Cum his sociabat sese innumerabilis varii generis turba, cui superstitiones publicæ quæstui erant, mercatores qui thura, bestias, aliaque vendebant deorum

magnificent theatre, on the splendour and success of which the popularity of the existing authorities mainly depends; and in which the serious exhibitions are essentially religious, the lighter as intimately with the indulgence of the baser passions. They behold another public building, where even worse feelings, the cruel and the sanguinary, are pampered by the animating contests of wild beasts and of gladiators, in which they themselves may shortly play a dreadful part,

Butcher'd to make a Roman holyday!

[b] Show and spectacle are the characteristic enjoyments of the whole people, and every show and spectacle is either sacred to the

cultoribus necessaria, architecti, caupones, aurifices (Act. xix. 25.) fabri lignarii, statuarii, sculptores, tibicines, citharædi et alii, quibus omnibus dii, eorumque ministri, templa, cæremoniæ, dies fasti, magnas afferebant ad vitam beate ducendam opportunitates. *Mosheim*, *ut supra*, I. 31.

b The Fathers insist on the intimate connection between all the public spectacles and idolatry.—Igitur si ex idololatria universam spectaculorum paraturam constare constiterit, indubitate præjudicatum erit etiam ad spectacula pertinere renuntiationis nostræ testimonium in lavacro, quæ Diabolo et angelis ejus sint mancipata, scilicet per idololatriam. *Tert. de Spect.* IV.

religious feelings, or incentive to the lusts of the flesh; those feelings which must be entirely eradicated, those lusts which must be brought into total subjection to the law of Christ. They encounter likewise itinerant jugglers, diviners, magicians, who impose upon the credulous, and excite the contempt of the enlightened; in the first case, dangerous rivals to those who should attempt to propagate a new faith by imposture and deception; in the latter [c], naturally tending to prejudice the mind against all miraculous pretensions whatever: here, like Elymas, endeavouring to outdo the signs and wonders of the apostles, there throwing suspicion on all asserted supernatural agency, by the frequency and clumsiness of their delusions. They meet philosophers [d], frequently itinerant like themselves; or teachers of new religions, priests of Isis and Serapis, who have brought into equal discredit what might otherwise have appeared a proof of philanthropy, the per-

c See Weston on Miracles.

d Ὅπερ πεποίηκασι μάλιστα Κυνικῶν τινες, δημοσίᾳ πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας διαλεγόμενοι. Orig. c. Cels. III. 50.

forming laborious journeys at the sacrifice of personal ease and comfort for the moral and religious improvement of mankind; or at least have so accustomed the public mind to similar pretensions, as to take away every attraction from their boldness or novelty. There are also the teachers of the different mysteries, which would engross all the anxiety of the inquisitive, perhaps excite, even if they did not satisfy, the hopes of the more pure and lofty minded. Such must have been among the obstacles which would force themselves on the calmer moments of the most ardent; such the overpowering difficulties, of which it would be impossible to overlook the importance, or elude the force; which required no sober calculation to estimate, no laborious enquiry to discover; which met and confronted them wherever they went, and which, either in desperate presumption, or deliberate reliance on their own preternatural powers, they must have contemned and defied.

The commencement of their labours was usually disheartening, and ill calculated to keep alive the flame of ungrounded enthu-

siasm. They begin their operations in the narrow and secluded synagogue of their own countrymen. The novelty of their doctrine, and curiosity secure them at first a patient attention; but as the more offensive tenets are developed, the most fierce and violent passions are awakened. Scorn and hatred are seen working in the clouded brows and agitated countenances of the leaders: if here and there one is *pricked to the heart*, it requires considerable moral courage to acknowledge his conviction; and the new teachers are either cast forth from the indignant assembly of their own people, liable to all the punishments which they are permitted to inflict, scourged and beaten; or, if they succeed in forming a party, they give rise to a furious schism; and thus appear before the heathen with the dangerous notoriety of having caused a violent tumult, and broken the public peace by their turbulent and contentious harangues: at all events, disclaimed by that very people on whose traditions they profess to build their doctrines, and to whose Scriptures they appeal in justification of their pretensions.

They endure, they persevere, they continue to sustain the contest against Judaism and paganism. It is still their deliberate, ostensible, and avowed object, to overthrow all this vast system of idolatry; to tear up by the roots all ancient prejudices; to silence shrines, sanctified by the veneration of ages as oracular; to consign all those gorgeous temples to decay, and all those images to contempt; to wean the people from every barbarous and dissolute amusement. They must have anticipated the time, when the indignant priesthood should lament over the desertion of the luxurious Daphne, and see their unrepaired temples crumble away, while their own stipends are withheld, and their persons treated with contempt[e]. For it was not the object

[e] Already in the days of Trajan this complaint had commenced: "Certe satis constat, prope etiam desolata "templa cœpisse celebrari, et sacra solemnia diu intermissa "repeti; passimque vænire victimas, quarum adhuc ra- "rissimus emptor inveniebatur." *Plin. Trajan.*

The works of Julian and Libanius the sophist are full of tragical lamentations on this subject. "Quinimo, ut ve- "rius proloquar, haruspices has fabulas, conjectores, arioli, "vates, et nunquam non vani concinnavere fanatici; qui

of the apostles, that their religion should be received into the community of gods; they enforce total and complete subversion, extermination, extinction. They will not be content that Christ be admitted into the Pantheon; the whole edifice must be cleared for his reception, and the whole quarry of gods cast to the moles and to the bats. That such men should attempt this, should persevere in attempting, thus against hope and against reason, yet at the same time display the prudence and promptitude, with which Paul, for instance, availed himself of the inscription *To the unknown god* in Athens; that they should thus unite the desperate rashness of the fanatic, with the coolness of the impostor; madness of design, with policy of conduct; all this is an anomaly in human action, which defies all

"ne suæ artes intereant, ac ne stipes exiguas consultoribus "excutiant jam raris, si quando vos velle rem venire in in-"vidiam compererunt, negliguntur dii, clamitant, atque "templis jam raritas summa est. Jacent antiquæ derisui "cærimoniæ, et sacrorum quondam veterrimi ritus religio-"num novarum superstitionibus occiderunt; merito hu-"manum genus tot miseriarum angustiis premitur, tot la-"borum excruciatur ærumnis." *Arnob. contr. Gent.* I. 24.

precedent, and disdains all comparison. What were their means of success? Every prepossession was against their nation, their rank in life. If we accept the self-abasing testimony of Paul, their persons were deficient in commanding dignity, *his bodily presence was weak*[f]. Was it eloquence? But on the same authority, *his speech was contemptible.* Unquestionably his language is equally opposite to the florid and elaborate diction, which enchanted the Asiatics, and the perspicuous, vivid, harmonious rhetoric, which would be demanded by the Athenian. Was it the sublimity of their arguments? but their arguments, without proof, were extravagant beyond all description. What was their story, reduced to its simple elements? That the great God of the universe had sent his Son into a remote country among a barbarous and detested people; that this people had put him to death without resistance: and though according to his disciples he had risen again from the dead; did the Jews, the best qua-

[f] 2 Cor. x. 10.

lified to judge, generally acknowledge the fact? They reject, they execrate his name; they denounce, they persecute his people. Yet, continue the apostles, believe in this Christ. To prove your belief, first forswear all those vices on which your former religion looked, if not with approbation, with indulgence; renounce all your amusements; cast off all your habits; break all the ties of kindred; resist the claims of natural affection. But think not to do this with impunity, calculate not on security; misery awaits your choice of our creed; those who believe in Christ crucified must be prepared to take up their cross with Christ.

This was the tale, thus argued, thus, unless *by signs and wonders*, unsupported, with which the apostles, men otherwise sane, rational, and moderate, calculated on overthrowing the vast system of pagan idolatry; on changing the moral condition of the world; on ejecting Jupiter and Apollo, Æsculapius and Venus, from their fanes; on convincing Gentile philosophy of foolishness; on superseding Plato, and Zeno, and

Epicurus, the wickedness of the worst, the wisdom of the best.

But in one respect it is impossible now to conceive the extent, to which the apostles of the crucified Jesus shocked all the feelings of mankind. The public establishment of Christianity, the adoration of ages, the reverence of nations, has thrown around the cross of Christ an indelible and inalienable sanctity. No effort of the imagination can dissipate the illusion of dignity which has gathered round it; it has been so long dissevered from all its coarse and humiliating associations, that it cannot be cast back and desecrated into its state of opprobrium and contempt. To the most daring unbeliever among ourselves, it is the symbol, the absurd, and irrational, he may conceive, but still the ancient and venerable symbol of a powerful and influential religion: what was it to the Jew and to the heathen? the basest, the most degrading punishment of the lowest criminal! the proverbial terror of the wretched slave! it was to them, what the most despicable and revolting instrument of public execution is

to us[g]. Yet to the cross of Christ, men turned from deities in which were embodied every attribute of strength, power, and dignity; in an incredibly short space of time, multitudes gave up the splendour, the pride, and the power of paganism, to adore a being, who was thus humiliated beneath the meanest of mankind, who had become, according to the literal interpretation of the prophecy, *a very scorn of men, and an outcast of the people.*

I know not how to conclude, but in the words of Origen: "If we must give a pro-"bable reason for the first establishment "of Christianity, we must say, it is in-"credible, that the apostles, ignorant and "unlearned men, should have trusted in

[g] The punishment of the cross was so proper unto servants, that *servile supplicium* in the language of the Romans signifies the same, and though in the words of Vulcatius before cited, they both go together, as also in Capitolinus: "Nam et in crucem milites tulit, et servilibus "suppliciis semper affecit." *In Macr.* XII. Yet either is sufficient to express crucifixion, as in Tacitus, "Malam "potentiam servili supplicio expiavit." Hist. IV. 11. And again, "Sumptum de eo supplicium in servilem modum." *Note to Pearson on the Creed*, art. IV. See Plautus passim.

"any means of preaching Christianity, except the miraculous powers conferred upon them, and the grace of God, which avouched their doctrine: or that their hearers should have abandoned the ancient rites of their forefathers, and have been converted to tenets so strange and opposite to those in which they had been educated, unless moved by some miraculous power, and by preternatural wonders[h]."

[h] Καὶ γὰρ εἰ χρὴ καὶ τῷ εἰκότι χρῆσθαι λόγῳ περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆθεν Χριστιανῶν συστάσεως, φήσομεν ὅτι οὐ πιθανὸν, οὔτε τοὺς Ἰησοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἄνδρας ἀγραμμάτους καὶ ἰδιώτας, ἄλλῳ τινὶ τεθαῤῥηκέναι πρὸς τὸ καταγγεῖλαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸν Χριστιανισμὸν, ἢ τῇ δοθείσῃ αὐτοῖς δυνάμει, καὶ τῇ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ εἰς τὰ δηλούμενα πράγματα χάριτι· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ τοὺς ἀκροωμένους αὐτῶν μετατεθεῖσθαι ἐκ πατρίων πολυχρονίων ἐθῶν, μὴ ἀξιολόγου τινὸς δυνάμεως αὐτοὺς καὶ τεραστίων πραγμάτων μετακινησάντων ἐπὶ τὰ οὕτω ξένα καὶ ἀλλότρια τῶν συντρόφων αὐτοῖς δογμάτων. Orig. c. Cels. VIII. 47.

LECTURE VII.

MATTH. x. 16.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

I HAVE endeavoured to describe the situation of the apostles when they commenced their undertaking in one of the heathen cities; the hatred and obloquy to which they were immediately exposed among their own people, the improbability that they would obtain a hearing from the Gentiles, whose vices, and not their vices alone, but whose daily occupations, amusements, and pleasures, it was their first duty to proscribe. Instead of mingling in the processions, partaking in the festivals, enjoying the spectacles of his fellow citizens, the Christian proselyte became a secluded, scrupulous, and isolated being. Life was literally commenced anew in all its habits, occupations, thoughts, and feelings, often in its connections and attachments. For

the splendid temple and public ceremony, the believer had to lurk in some obscure and secret chamber, where he might snatch his hurried and interrupted devotions; to steal out at midnight, and when persecution was threatened, conceal himself in cemeteries and catacombs; instead of the rich and imaginative worship of his fathers, in which all the senses were dazzled and intoxicated with lamps, incense, and music, he joined in rites which were simple, both from the nature of the institution, and the poverty of the communicants[a]. Meanness, humility, and obscurity were the avowed characteristics of the new religion. What had the Christian neophyte to gain, and what to lose? Would the exclusiveness of the new religion, which appealed to his intel-

[a] Nos deos immortales colimus, quos universitas populorum, quos etiam nominibus propriis sacratissimi principes venerantur. Nos deos colimus lætitia, conviviis, cantionibus, ludis, comessatione et lascivia; vos vero hominem crucifixum, cui placere non possunt, qui his omnibus perfruuntur, qui damnatis voluptatibus tristem et infœcundam diligit castitatem.

Such is the argument of a heathen judge with the martyr Epipodius. *Ruinartus. Select. Mart. Acta*, p. 75.

lectual or spiritual pride, be equivalent to the freedom which he abandoned? While a heathen, he might believe as much or as little as he chose. He might worship in whatever temple he pleased; in that of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome, Serapis in Egypt, or the Sun in the East. He might addict himself to any sect of philosophy. Whatever his turn of mind, religion presented him with a deity, philosophy with a creed, suited to his habits of thinking and feeling. If of a severe character, he joined the Stoics, if more lax, the Epicureans; if inclined to free discussion, the Lyceum invited him into its walks, or occupied his imagination with the lofty reveries of Plato. All this liberty lay under a severe interdict; the apostles admitted no partial conformity: their creed was peremptory, dictatorial, commanded the reception of all its articles with implicit faith, or refused to impart its privileges. The secession from the world was complete and perpetual. The convert must arm himself with that rare moral courage, which will endure, not merely the open and violent hostility that usually

provokes a manly spirit of resistance, but the more wearing and incessant attacks of contempt, humiliation, and calumny. For this the dearest ties were to be severed; he was to encounter *foes in his own household;* he was to postpone even the love of father and mother, for that of Him whom he had never seen, whose life and death he knew only by the report of strangers, and those coming from a country infamous for superstition, and obliged to confess that their lives were not secure, and their success but partial on that distant scene. For the author of the religion did not personally demand their homage, and prove his mission from God; the believers were to surrender themselves to the delegates of a Delegate, the servants of a Master, who had not condescended to visit with his presence those, from whom he demanded this extraordinary sacrifice. The call was *from afar,* which thus summoned them to the total abandonment of the world.

The progress of Christianity has been attributed, anong other causes, to this exclusive and uncompromising spirit, which

enclosed, as it were, within an insuperable barrier, those who once enrolled themselves among the believers. But the policy or the good fortune of the apostles in thus extending their pale to a certain point, and then entrenching themselves with all the rigour of ancient prejudice, is unaccountable. They are so far emancipated from the hereditary unsocial and intolerant spirit of their people, as to admit every race under heaven into their communion. But beyond this, they are as stern and inflexible as their forefathers; they are not acquitted of that hatred to the human race with which pagan writers charge the Jews. How came men thus nurtured in the strongest prejudices of Judaism to conceive the unnatural notion of throwing open the doors of the synagogue, and consequently of heaven itself, the exclusive possession of which had hitherto been their pride in prosperity and their consolation in adversity? The difference between the proselytism of the Jew and that of the Christian is of great importance. The Jew communicated with sullen reluctance, unless perhaps for gain or ad-

vantage, his inalienable patrimony, the favour of his God[b]. It was the duty, the delight, the glory of the Christian to extend indiscriminately the blessings of his religion. The Jewish proselytes, it is well known, were of two kinds; the perfect proselyte of righteousness alone was amenable

[b] Selden. de Jur. Nat. Slevogt de Proselytis. Where our Saviour speaks of the Pharisees *compassing sea and land to make one proselyte*, Matt. xxiii. 15. I cannot help thinking that he refers rather to converting Jews to pharisaic opinions, than Gentiles to Judaism. However this may be, Lightfoot's Commentary explains the contradiction; "Not that they cared for proselytes, whom they accounted as a scab and a plague, but that the more they could draw over to their religion, the greater draught they should have for gain, and the more purses to fish in. These therefore, being so proselyted, they made doubly more the children of hell than themselves. For when they had drawn them into their net, having got their prey, they were no further concerned what became of them, so they got some benefit by them. They might perish in ignorance, superstition, atheism, and all kinds of wickedness; this was no matter of concern to the Scribes and Pharisees; only let them remain in Judaism, that they might lord it over their consciences and purses."

This is remarkably in accordance with Tacitus. "Pessimus quisque, spretis religionibus patriis, tributa et stipes illuc congerebant." *Hist.* V. 5.

Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.

Juv. Sat. VI. 547.

to the observance of the whole law, and shared in all the privileges of Judaism. But the treasure of divine favour was ungraciously and parsimoniously doled out by the more conscientious Israelite. The convert was admitted after a severe probation and by a painful rite. Even after his admission, he was still looked upon with jealousy and mistrust, his privileges were narrowed, his descendants stigmatized and considered of an inferior caste; for the children of the stranger continued strangers to the latest generation [c]. The infection of gentile blood was never entirely washed out [d]; the blot in the spiritual escutcheon was indelible. Hence Judaism made no very extensive or permanent progress. The number of proselytes, in the opinion of Gibbon, was never much superior to that of apostates. It

[c] The rigid Jews hated the proselytes even of justice. "Duri sunt Israelitis proselyti, sicut apostema. Quum "scriptum est Ezra xiv. 1. *Copulabit se proselytis eis et* "*apostemâtibus afficietur domus Israel.*" *Massecheth Jevamoth.* Dicunt sapientes, Duri Israeli sunt proselyti, sicut plaga lepræ. *Maimon. in Hilc.* quoted in Slevogt *de Proselytis.*

[d] Selden de Jur. Nat. II. 4. V. 20.

could scarcely be otherwise, as their aversion from the society of the unclean [d], and their horror of legal pollution, must have prevented the freedom of intercourse necessary to work conversions. Hyrcanus indeed forced the conquered Idumeans to embrace the law, and submit to circumcision [e]. The desire of affixing a permanent badge of subjection on a rival people, predominated over the narrow feeling of exclusion. Pride and interest would likewise sometimes prevail over bigotry; they would relax their rigour, in order to obtain a powerful proselyte, as for instance Helena queen of the Adiabeni, and her son Izates [f].

[d] *Μηδὲ κοινῶνειν τοῖς καθ' ἕτεραν συνηθεῖαν βίου ζῆν προαιρουμενοις.* Joseph. cont. Apion. Compare Acts x. 28. John xi. 3. xviii. 28.

. Selden is of opinion, that this rigid and unsocial notion began about, or a little before the Asmonean kings. "Eos enim, qui sacra immunditiæ lege non tenebantur, "ipsi eis, qui ea tenebantur, semper immundos haberi, "jam ex superinducto hoc atque interveniente jure vole- "bant, ut facilius sic eorum consortio, quantum fieri pos- "set, arcerentur Judæi. Quod et tempore Hasmonæ- "orum, aut ante, initium habuit." *De Jur. Nat.* II. 5.

[e] Joseph. XIII. cap. 17.

[f] Joseph. Ant. XX. 2. compare also Ant. XVIII. 4, 5

It appears indeed from other cases, that their converts were chiefly of the female sex; and there is reason for suspicion, that in most instances their object was gain, rather than godliness[g]. Josephus distinctly states, that though they made many converts, they retained few; and the pagan writers, who loudly denounce their aversion from all social intercourse with other people[h], betray no very violent apprehensions

[g] Acts xvi. 13, 14. xiii. 50. xvii. 4—12.

That the Jews were not a little diligent in gaining over the fair sex to their religion, and particularly such as were of figure and eminence, we learn from the account Josephus has given us of the conversions of Helena and Fulvia, the former a queen, the latter a Roman matron, wife of Saturnius, a favourite of the emperor Tiberius. And that very many women were prevailed with to become proselytes appears from what he tells us of the citizens of Damascus, who, having formed a design to kill all the Jews in that city, were obliged with great solicitude to conceal it from their wives, because they were well nigh all addicted to the Jewish religion. *Biscoe on Acts.*

[h] Τοὐναντίον μέντοι πολλοὶ παρ' αὐτῶν εἰς τοὺς ἡμετέρους νόμους συνέβησαν εἰσελθεῖν, καὶ τίνες μὲν ἔμειναν, εἰσὶ δὲ οἳ τὴν καρτερίαν οὐχ ὑπομείναντες, πάλιν ἀπέστησαν. Joseph. contra Apion. II. 10. Josephus labours hard to extenuate their unsocial habits. One interpretation of a passage in Horace has been adduced to evince their zeal for proselytism.

——ac veluti nos
Judæi cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.

of their encroachment on the established religions[i]. But if these more ardent and submissive converts were thus uncourteously received, the proselytes of the gate, who were neither circumcised nor bound to observe the whole law, were barely tolerated[k]. The national pride of the Jews strove hard with their intolerance, and induced them to enforce, as far as they were able, the reception of their law in the Holy Land; but with the majority of the settlers they were

But it is highly improbable that the Jews should bring strangers into their synagogues by coercion: the passage probably alludes to the frequent "beating with rods," among their own people.

[i] Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium; separati epulis, discreti cubilibus. *Tacit. Hist.*

Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti:
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.
Juv. Sat. XIV. 103.

Caverunt ne cum peregrinis communicarent: quod ex causa factum paulatim in disciplinam religionemque convertit. Just. Hist. XXXVI. 2. In truth, when writers so late as Tacitus and Juvenal speak of converts to Judaism, they not improbably include Christians.

[k] Quod vero ad proselytos inquilinos, eos Judæi non tam solenniter recipiebant quam tolerabant. *Pfeiffer. Ant. Heb.* I. 1.

obliged to content themselves with this dubious and unsatisfactory conformity. Even beyond the bounds of Palestine, in despite of their own inhospitable and repulsive conduct, the simplicity of their worship, and the sublimity of their tenets, forced their way among the heathen, and their synagogues were attended by a certain number of those called in the Acts *devout Greeks.* Many of these probably were not, strictly speaking, proselytes, some perhaps only occasional attendants, others made an eclectic religion, and partially conformed to both. These were doubtless in the most favourable state for the admission of a new creed. They had felt the spiritual poverty of paganism, had arrived at the knowledge of the one great Creator, and submitted to the moral observances of the law; in short, their affections were detached from the old religion, and not too deeply implicated with the new[1]. Still, from these vague and general principles it was a violent transition to the belief in a crucified Redeemer. Un-

[1] Compare Jos. Mede, Discourse XX.

less the Lord had given *testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands*[m], men, obviously both inquiring and conscientious, would scarcely have given their impartial judgment in favour of the apostles. The rapid progress of Christianity among this class is a strong testimony to its truth: though, after all, I apprehend their number, out of Syria, to have been by no means considerable; and including all these as proselytes to Judaism, the church made more converts in a few years than the synagogue in a century. Nor was the coalition with this body without danger to the cause of the apostles. The true and rigid Israelites looked on these half-proselytes with undisguised dislike and contempt[n]. What then was the amazement and indignation of the unbelieving Jews, the consternation and perplexity of the Hebrew converts to Christianity, when it was announced that *God is no respecter*

[m] Acts xiv. 3.

[n] Acts xv. 1. It was a common maxim of the Jews, that all uncircumcised persons go to hell. Pirke Elies. quoted by Whitby in loc. Compare Benson, First Plant. of Christianity, II. p. 47.

of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him[o]*?* For a time, they flattered themselves that the dignity of the law would be maintained by the enforcement of circumcision, and the rest of the Mosaic ordinances. But when the assembled apostles only so far condescended to their prejudices, as to recommend, not enjoin authoritatively, those few observances which were enforced on the proselytes of the gate[p], the measure was so odious, that a long controversy, and perhaps a lasting schism, was the consequence. For they could not endure a decree, which thus placed these vacillating proselytes, these half-converted Greeks, on a level with those in whom the pure blood of Abraham had flowed for ages. Thus directly opposite to the spirit of their religion was the conduct of the apostles; it was wise, liberal, enlightened, but at the same time bold and dangerous. It annulled centuries of exclusive privileges; it abolished

o Acts x. 34, 35.

p Acts xv. 28, 29. This was the extent to which the apostolic decree went.

at once all distinctions of clean and unclean, which were as dear to the Israelites as odious to the Gentiles. The Christians would mingle with the heathen in all the indifferent transactions in life; they would eat with them, converse with them, and were eager and zealous for every approximation, which might enable them to extend the privileges of their faith. But if the apostles, bred in so extraordinary a school for such profound and judicious policy, knew how far to concede, they knew also where to stop. Suddenly they resume again their inflexible rigour. They will admit nothing which may in the most remote degree tend to idolatry, they will allow no quarter to philosophy. Instead of studying to render their tenets palatable to their hearers, they jealously avoid all conformity to popular belief or prevalent opinion. They will not propitiate the Platonist by arguing the immateriality of the soul; they run counter, needlessly so in some instances, to the general feeling; they disdain every attempt to smooth away what is revolting to the pride, they dissemble nothing

which is repugnant to the passions. This tolerant intolerance, this liberal illiberality, in such men is incomprehensible. If imposture would so far have infringed on the rigour of Jewish opinions, it would have gone further, and accommodated itself in some way to the prevalent belief; it would have been content with the admission of Christianity into the general community of religions, not played the dangerous and desperate game of endeavouring to extirpate and subvert all other systems of belief. Fanaticism could never have proceeded with such prudence, temper, and moderation. The apostles would either have adhered to those notions, to which the zealots among their own converts were so obstinately wedded; or they would have conducted the transaction in so dictatorial and unconciliatory a manner, as to alienate for ever the whole body of Jewish converts. The event proved the wisdom of their proceedings; but unless that wisdom was *from on high*, I know not whence it can have been derived to a body so formed and constituted, as that of the apostles of Jesus.

If then the rational and sober conviction of their divine mission; if the visible assurance of their preternatural powers; in short, the satisfactory evidence which they could produce of the facts on which their religion rested; if these were not the means on which the apostles relied, and by which such multitudes of converts were made, can we attribute their success to any other, equally influential, yet less creditable causes? Are there any yet unexplored principles of our nature, by appealing to which the new faith made such rapid advances? The passions of mankind are the instruments by which every great moral as well as political revolution is accomplished. There is a spirit of restlessness in the human mind, which only requires to be called into action; once stimulate a large mass of mankind into energetic motion, it is astonishing how blindly it will follow in the track pointed out. Whoever therefore can excite, and by excitement enslave the heart of man to his service, will in all probability succeed. To communicate his own enthusiasm, or direct that of others in the channel he desires, is

as well the test of genius, as the pledge of triumph to the military, political, or religious adventurer. The conqueror places his strength in the coarser and more violent passions, the love of plunder, the licence of victory, the pride of distinction for personal prowess or fortitude; these are more universal, and lie, as it were, more upon the surface of our nature, the more inflammable in uncivilized, but kindled without difficulty in less barbarous countries. The political leader, whether despot or demagogue, according to the state of society, appeals to the love of power in the few, or of independence in the many; the pride of an oligarchy, either of wealth or nobility, or the discontents of the populace, are the instruments with which he builds up the fabric of his ambition. The religious innovator enlists the same passions in his service, though in a different manner. In all cases, his doctrines must be adapted either to the general feelings of mankind, or those of the particular state of society on which he would act. Thus Mahomet both found Arabia in a favourable state of imper-

fect civilization for the reception of his doctrines, and, by simultaneously inflaming the more ardent passions, rapidly enlisted converts from every quarter, whose enthusiasm was kept alive by incessant excitement, and elated by increasing success. The simplicity of his creed struck the imagination of his uneducated countrymen; the violent threw themselves into his ranks as warriors; the sensual were enchanted by the latitude of his moral precepts, and the luxurious anticipations of his paradise; the austere were satisfied by his rigid fasts and stern sobriety; the superstitious surrendered themselves to the decree of blind fatality.

The apostles of Christ appear to have depended for their success on no violent excitement: primitive Christianity was temperate in all its emotions; *Let your moderation be known unto all men*[q] was among its constant precepts; even the restraint of the natural appetites was commanded in a manner totally opposite to the proud ri-

[q] Philipp. iv. 5.

gour of the ancient stoic, or the self-excruciating discipline of the modern monk. It had nothing striking, vehement, or exaggerated in its precepts of self-denial; and however great the sacrifice demanded, there was no publicity to captivate by applause; and, at first, rarely that fierce persecution which is naturally repelled with persevering obstinacy. It was at one period of infidelity a favourite theory, that Christianity was merely a skilful adaptation of the doctrines of the Jewish Essenes and Therapeutæ on a more daring and extensive scale. But the difference is as remarkable as obvious. The secession of the Christian from the world was total; but this by no means implied a renunciation of the social duties, or a severe abstinence from indifferent practices. The Christian had the more difficult, but more inglorious and unobtrusive task of *using the world as not abusing it.* Antony the monk was probably a lineal descendant of the Jewish ascetic, but it was some centuries before this unsocial principle was admitted into Christianity. The apostles sent none of their converts

into the desert; they prescribed no long and austere ritual, to the due discharge of which the regular offices of life were to give place. They proclaimed not, as afterwards the Montanist and Manichean [r], the body of man to be the creation of the evil principle of matter, and consequently all its functions alike gross and sinful. Their religion armed its disciples with no scourge, it wore the body with no perpetual maceration; it subdued the flesh by inward principle, not by the infliction of external pain. If there is some resemblance, as to the purity of practice, between the Essene as described in the flattering panegyric of Josephus, the Therapeuta by that of Philo [s], and the Christian

[r] Videtur autem Paulus eo consilio curam corporis Romanis suis præcepisse, ne, ut multi inter Judæos faciebant, corpus ergastulum quoddam et animi impedimentum, atque adeo durius habendum, omnique modo affligendum putarent. Hæc perversa opinio sectam Essenorum tenebat, de qua est apud Josephum, B. J. II. 8. *Krebs. Obs. in Nov. Test. in Rom.* xiii. 14.

[s] Basnage gave the deathblow to a theory adopted by many Roman catholic and some protestant writers, which identified the Therapeutæ of Philo with the early Christians. A list of the writers on both sides of the question may be seen in Fabricius, Lux Evang. Compare likewise Prideaux's Conn. part II. b. 5.

as represented in the apostolic epistles, it only makes the difference more striking. Quiet, inoffensive, obedient to the laws for conscience sake, seeking no distinction, making no display, shunning no duty compatible with their faith[t], the Christians grew and multiplied[u]. The progress of Christianity at once illustrates the prophetic truth and the beauty of its Master's parable. It did not explode with the awful and terrific majesty of the Mosaic law; it did not spread like the fiery lava of Mahometanism; but, like the silent leaven, it worked its way imperceptibly, and fer-

[t] Compare Paley, Evid. II. 354.

[u] Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῇ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων. οὔτε γὰρ πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένῃ χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν. . . . . . κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδας τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληρώθη, ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες, ἔν τε ἐσθῆτι καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ βίῳ, θαυμαστὴν καὶ ὁμολογουμένως παράδοξον ἐνδείκνυνται τὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν πολιτείας. . . . . . γαμοῦσιν ὡς πάντες· τεκνογονοῦσιν, ἀλλ' οὐ ῥίπτουσι τὰ γεννώμενα· τράπεζαν κοινὴν παρατίθενται, ἀλλ' . . . . . κοινήν. ἐν σαρκὶ τυγχάνουσιν, ἀλλ' οὐ κατὰ σάρκα ζῶσιν· ἐπὶ γῆς διατρίβουσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν οὐρανῷ πολιτεύονται. πείθονται τοῖς ὡρισμένοις νόμοις, καὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις βίοις νικῶσι τοὺς νόμους. Justin. Martyr. Epist. ad Diognetum.

mented the whole mass of humankind with its healthful and purifying influence.

It may indeed be argued, that the nature of the doctrines was such, that they found the public mind naturally prepared for their acceptance. The apostles had the good fortune to offer to the belief of man, what his mind was only anxious to justify itself in believing. The dignity of his being was so obviously exalted by the revelation of the immortality of the soul, that his pride caught at it at once; and without examining the proofs too rigidly, embraced with all the fervour of spiritual ambition doctrines, which flattered his loftiest aspirations, and satisfied that eager desire which is inseparable from his nature, of penetrating into the secrets of futurity. Those who came to inform mankind of the resurrection to eternal life, and salvation through faith in the atonement of Christ, offered such splendid prospects on such easy terms, that it is no wonder if men crowded round a shrine, the oracles of which spoke in such explicit and exalting language. Nor is this argument without confirmation, from the

state of the human mind at the particular juncture at which Christianity appeared. Of all the heathen fables, the most extravagant, and least satisfactory, even to the most superstitious, related to the state after death.

> Esse aliquod manes, et subterranea regna,
> Et contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
> Atque una transire vadum tot millia cymba,
> Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur [x].

And the distinct denial of a future state by Cæsar and Cicero, in speeches delivered before public assemblies [y], proves sufficiently that the mind of the people would by no means resent any attack on this part of their religious creed. In fact, the presence and power of the gods during this life was the only point which was of much advantage to the priesthood, and therefore they were generally content with threatening the immediate visible punishment of offences or

[x] Juv. Sat. II. 149.

> The silent realm of disembodied ghosts,
> The frogs that croak along the Stygian coasts,
> The thousand souls in one crazed vessel steer'd,
> Not boys believe, save boys without a beard.

[y] Cæsar, apud Sallust. B. C. c. 50. Cic. pro Cluent. c. 61.

neglect. The gods revenged themselves with pestilence, famine, and conflagration, with earthquakes, or defeat in war. The oracles were rarely questioned, and never returned answer, except when consulted on temporal affairs. Pluto received few hecatombs, and the inexorable Fates were propitiated by no offerings. This deficiency in the popular creed philosophy had in vain attempted to supply, and legislation endeavoured in vain to establish by its edicts truths which were so loosely rooted in the hearts of the people. Here then, it is urged with considerable plausibility, the apostles fortunately intervened; this space in the human mind being vacant and unoccupied, they seized upon and secured it as their own. Here was the excitement; it went deeper than the superficial bodily feelings; the mental passions of curiosity and apprehension concerning the future, religious terror and religious hope, were the strings with which they governed the hearts of their followers. *Death swallowed up in victory*, and the promise of life eternal, needed no corroborative testimony; such

momentous truths carried conviction to the willing heart, immediately that they were boldly and distinctly announced[z].

But in the first place, however it may have operated in their intercourse with the Gentiles, the doctrine of the resurrection had no novelty which could command the attention or flatter the pride of the Jews, among whom, except the Sadducees, it was already an established and universal tenet. *It is good,* says the martyred youth to his persecutor in the apocryphal book of the Maccabees, *being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life*[a]. *I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day*[b], are the words of Martha concerning Lazarus, before she knew that Christ *was the resurrection and the life*[c]. *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question,* exclaims Paul on one occasion; and immediately the Pharisaic part of his audience, supposing that he alludes to the com-

[z] Compare Gibbon, ch. 15.
[a] 2 Macc. vii. 14.
[b] John xi. 24.
[c] Acts xxiii. 6.

mon belief, espouse his cause. The apostles offered to their countrymen, only in a new and unpalatable manner, that which was already their patrimony and birthright. For while the looser supposed that as children of Abraham they were inevitably predestined to eternal life[d], and the more rigid rested their security on their legal obedience, the Christians annulled both claims; and loaded the tenet, of itself so popular, with terms which made it both improbable and odious. Immortality brought to light by Jesus, was not the immortality on which they calculated. What constituted its soundest proof was to them a fatal objection. They could see their way clearly into Abraham's bosom, but when it was necessary to pass and adore the cross of Christ, they turned indignantly aside. Sealed already for everlasting bliss by outward circumcision; they would not hear of the inward circumcision of the heart.

II. As concerns the Gentiles, we may inquire how the earliest authoritative assur-

[d] See note to Lecture VI. p. 255.

ance of this doctrine came to be received from a quarter so odious and unpopular. How was it, that a tenet, which philosophy had in vain attempted to plant as an active principle in the mind, and which, by appealing to the same pride and the same passions, it had endeavoured to establish with the acuteness of its most subtle, and the exquisite elegance of its most polished writers, now, that it had been almost rooted out by the more successful doctrines of the later Epicureanism, on the mere dogmatic assertion, the ipse dixit, of these rambling Jews, became the deliberate creed of multitudes? How did Peter and Paul thus put to shame Socrates and Plato? In Athens itself, this rude and unpolished orator not merely obtains a hearing, but makes proselytes. If the mind of man were so prone to this belief, why was it obviously losing rather than gaining ground? If the acceptability secured the reception of the doctrine, how was this the period, and these obscure individuals the teachers, who first governed the human mind by the inculcation of such notions, so as to convince men by thou-

sands, and retain them in the obedience implied in their belief? Those writers, who, like Chubb and Bolingbroke, have pretended to detect a discrepancy between the doctrines of the primitive apostles and Paul, have never, I believe, asserted the resurrection to be one of these adscititious tenets. Indeed without the resurrection, Christianity is no religion at all. Neither the truth itself therefore, nor the manner of announcing it, was invented or first adopted by the enlightened scholar of Gamaliel. But where did the others learn it? From their master? But clearly the fact on which the whole doctrine rested, as I have before shewn, was not believed by the apostles during the life-time of Christ. Did then this truth, perhaps I should say the mode of inculcating it successfully, after having eluded the grasp of the sages in the Lyceum, or the schools of Alexandria, suddenly burst on these fishermen, as they were dragging their nets by the lake of Gennesareth, or the publican in the receipt of custom, or rather on the assemblage of such men, when they were lamenting their

murdered teacher, and trembling for their own lives? Infidelity has been accustomed to trace this doctrine in a strange circle. The Jews, it is said, either received it from their Platonizing brethren in Alexandria, or drew it, during the captivity, from the same fountain with Plato and Pythagoras, the oriental theology. Jesus and his apostles merely adopted the current belief of their country, and promulgated it with success among the Greeks and other heathens. Thus then, a doctrine which either with its original inventors, or its earlier teachers, was ineffective, and comparatively uninfluential, from the suffrages of a few despised and odious Jews suddenly became the attractive article of a creed, which convinced the reason, and subjugated the conscience of incalculable multitudes. For, III. however the doctrine itself might account for its being received speculatively, we have still to explain its practical triumph over the depraved and ungodly will. The resurrection of the Christian was a resurrection perhaps to eternal life, perhaps to eternal death. Human responsibility was inse-

parable from human immortality. *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.* It was no certain and secure paradise, rich with all the luxuries, and dependant on the unalterable fatalism of the Mahometan: it was not an aristocratic Elysium of the brave and mighty;

Ἵνα περ ποδώκε' Ἀχιλλέα,
Τυδείδην τε, φασὶ, Διομήδεα.

It was attained, though purchased by the blood of Christ, by faithful, diligent, and incessant service on the part of man. I will assert further, it was assured by no sensible revelation of personal election; no external rite secured it, no internal inspiration ratified it. Some did fall away, all were in danger of falling. It was a hope, but no more than a hope in the best; it was controlled and subdued even in the apostles themselves by the consciousness of human infirmity, and a profound sense of the magnitude of the temptations by which they were environed. It is not sufficient to prove that the rewards of the new religion were attractive; were the means of attaining these rewards equally so? The

doctrine of a future state, which should offer a compromise for the strict fulfilment of the moral duties, would find, no doubt, ready acceptance. Indulge the pride of the intellect, without controlling the passions of the heart, and proselytes will crowd the temple. But the immortality of the soul, as taught by the apostles, was too unaccommodating; too much encumbered with limitations; jarred too much with other propensities of our nature; required too severe and too long a discipline: if it offered remission of sins for the past, it permitted no latitude for the future. The sacrifice was immediate and certain, the reward remote and contingent. But if the apostles, themselves designing men, foresaw or found by experience the extensive influence of this article in their creed, why did they load it with the demand of a purity, a disinterestedness, an humility, a charity, which while it was the most difficult test of sincerity, was neither attractive in itself, nor easily ascertained by their teachers. If authority over the minds of their followers was their object, a pharisaic ceremonial,

or an asceticism, like that of the Essenes, would have given them a more entire sovereignty. Surely it is unreasonable to conclude that they governed men through their hopes and fears, unless we can shew, first, how they obtained that despotic dominion; and secondly, the more extraordinary fact, how they came not to abuse or push their power into extremes. Gibbon has asserted, that, as taught by the Christians, "the doctrine of a future life was "improved by every additional circum-"stance, which could give weight and effi-"cacy to that important truth[e]." Was its inseparable connection with the sacrifice of Christ, the redemption through the blood of a crucified Redeemer, among the circumstances which favoured its reception among Jews and heathens, to whom the cross was alike a scandal and rock of offence? Was the attainment to its rewards only by means of a strict and self-denying life, what recommended it to a generation in the lowest state of depravity, and given up to the *evil heart of unbelief?* Or the resur-

[e] Ch. xv.

rection of the body, a tenet in direct opposition to every philosophical system, but which was the foundation, on which the whole Christian scheme rested? On this point bishop Watson has observed with his characteristic vigour, "that this corporeal "frame which is hourly mouldering away, "and resolved at last to the undistinguish-"ed elements from which it was at first "derived, should ever be clothed with im-"mortality, *that this corruptible should put* "*on incorruption*, is a truth so far removed "from the apprehension of philosophical re-"search, so dissonant from the common con-"ceptions of mankind, that amongst all ranks "and persuasions of men, it was esteemed an "impossible thing. At Athens, the philoso-"phers had listened with patience to Paul, "whilst they conceived him but a setter forth "of strange gods; but as soon as they com-"prehended that by the ἀνάστασις, he meant "the resurrection, they turned from him "with contempt [f]." This effect, either from his natural penetration or from experience, Paul must have anticipated; but he will nei-

[f] Apology, Letter III.

ther dissemble nor disguise it; this is invariably the prominent topic of his teaching; on this the glory of his Master is at stake, the whole religion of the crucified Redeemer at issue. For, after all, IV. the immortality of the soul, as preached by the apostles, was not a question of feeling or persuasion, but of fact. The apostles reasoned, it is true, and moved the hearts of men by their reasoning; but the validity of their conclusions avowedly depended on one plain circumstance, which either had or had not taken place. *If Christ rose not from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your hope also is vain.* The most miserable and outcast being upon earth would scarcely have been content with the assurance of his equality in the sight of God, and his certainty of favourable acceptance with the Redeemer, without proof of the sincerity and credibility of those who thus addressed him: "Bear all your miseries with "patience, take up your cross with cheerful "resignation, thank God for your afflictions, "embrace the self-denying religion, and, if "you fulfil the conditions imposed by the

"pure and holy law of the Gospel, you will "obtain reward after this life." "But was "there such a person as Christ? did he work "miracles? did he rise from the dead? are "these, who assure me that he did, credible "witnesses? have they proofs of their divine "mission?" Unless these questions could be answered to his satisfaction, however highly bribed by the apparent sublimity, and the consolations imparted through these doctrines, would a rational being have embraced the faith of Christ? Or grant that here and there a dying man, under the vague apprehension of future retribution, might have desperately caught at this stay; that a few disappointed or suffering wretches might have fled to this asylum, and refused to question its privilege of protection; that some enthusiastic visionaries might have felt, or fancied that they felt, internal emotions, which convinced them of their divine inspiration; is it conceivable, that multitudes in the prime of life, the height of the passions, the period of mature and sober reason, in Jerusalem and Samaria, in Syria and Babylonia, in the wild regions of Pontus and Galatia, in

Asia Minor and Greece, in Athens, in Corinth, in Rome, should believe what was demonstrable without demonstration, simply because they wished to believe it; that they should live like saints, and die like martyrs, for the sake of a doctrine, which, if a certain man, within a few years, after having been publicly crucified, had not risen from the grave, the very teachers themselves of this future life declared to be groundless, unwarranted, and hopeless. Either way then, whether the apostles relied on this doctrine, as on the instrument by which they expected to overthrow the ancient superstition, designing men would never have chosen, or certainly would never have adhered to so unpopular a mode of enforcing it: or if we suppose their success a contingency, which accidentally arose out of their possession of this valuable secret, humanly speaking, the influence of the doctrine must have been neutralized, considering those to whom it was addressed, by the strangeness of the fact, on which it depended, and the rigour of the terms on which it was offered.

Nor was this the only point on which the

uncompromising manner, in which the apostles announced their doctrines, implies their disregard of human assistance in the furtherance of their views. The world offered other means of advancing their cause, which they either neglected with unaccountable blindness, or refrained from with unaccountable prudence. Indeed, among the temptations incident to their mission, none could be more dangerous than that which would persuade them to run any risk, or adopt any line of conduct, however unworthy, for the establishment of their faith. By their own account they were still liable to human passions; from their history, we see that remarkable collisions of opinion and differences of feeling rose up amongst them; they make no needless display of courage, Paul escapes persecution by asserting his right as a free-born Roman, and saves his life by an appeal to Cæsar. He adopts the principle of expediency so far as an unnecessary conformity both in his own person and that of Timothy to Jewish prejudice; but beyond these points no prospect of advantage, no hope of advancing their faith,

induces them to court popularity, or betrays them into the least indiscretion. On one point especially it appears to me that these uneducated and ardent adventurers displayed remarkable sagacity, and abstained from a course of proceeding, which, however perilous, might have tempted men of equal intrepidity and zeal, but less prudence and moderation. To the lower orders of society, particularly that vast number who groaned under the burden of servitude[g], always oppressive, sometimes extremely cruel, a religion which proclaimed equality in the sight of God, and an equal share in the posthumous rewards of the Christian, must have been peculiarly acceptable. Here however was a most dangerous opening for intriguing men, determined at all hazards to advance their cause; here was a gulf into which blind fanatics would inevitably have plunged. The most ambiguous intimation of political, while they were openly announcing spiritual equality, the least indiscretion of language, the

[g] See Jortin, note to Discourse III. on the Treatment of the Slaves among the Romans.

slightest exaggeration of their avowed tenets, might have thrown the whole slave population into their scale. I do not mean that they were likely to raise the standard of insurrection; though with their real or supposed power of working wonders, they would have been no despicable leaders of such a sedition; and it is singular, that Florus relates of the great chieftain in the servile war, that he maintained his authority by the reputation of supernatural power[h]. But that, touching as they did the verge of the most dangerous doctrines[i],

[h] Syrus quidem nomine Funus, (magnitudo cladis facit, ut meminerimus,) fanatico furore simulato, dum Syriæ deæ comas jactat, ad libertatem et arma servos, quasi numinum imperio, concitavit; idque ut divinitus fieri probaret, in ore abdita nuce quam sulphure et igne stipaverat, leniter inspirans, flammam inter verba fundebat. *Florus, Hist.* III. 19.

It is a curious coincidence that the Jewish rebel and false Messiah, Barchocab, (*the son of the Star*,) made use of a similar trick: "Atque ut ille Barchocebas, autor "seditionis Judaicæ, stipulam in ore succensam anhelitu "ventilabat, ut flammas evomere putaretur." *Hieron. Apol.* II. *in Ruf.*

[i] Dicta est aliquando in senatu sententia, ut servos a liberis cultus distingueret; deinde apparuit, quantum periculum immineret, si servi nostri numerare nos cœpissent. *Seneca de Clem.* I. 24.

they should not even incur a suspicion of this kind from their watchful antagonists, considering how keenly alive the minds of the higher orders were to their danger; that the countrymen of Theudas, and Judas the Galilæan, and a host of seditious rebels, should neither be misunderstood by their own converts, nor misrepresented by their enemies; that they should preach to the poor, without inflaming their passions, and without exciting the jealousy of the rich; that their philanthropy should so rigidly confine its views to the moral and religious improvement of mankind, and look either with calm indifference, or the melancholy consciousness of their inability to afford any alleviation, on the sufferings of this degraded class [k]; that they should not

See Tacitus, Ann. IV. 27. and the remarkable speech of C. Cassius, XV. 23. who enlarges on the danger with the trembling anxiety of a modern West India proprietor.

The wise laws of Hadrian, for the improvement of the condition of the slaves, were probably rather extorted from the fears of the politician, than voluntarily conceded by the benevolence of the philanthropist.

[k] It would be an interesting inquiry, when and in what manner Christianity first interfered *directly* with the condition of slaves. St. Chrysostom, inveighing against the

merely hold out no hope of future emancipation, but enforce obedience to their masters on their own slave converts [l]; all this is remarkable, the more so, as their countrymen the Essenes, according to Philo [m], declared the unlawfulness of slavery, as an impious violation of the natural equality of mankind. Prudence suggested precisely the course they followed; but this prudence is by far the most inexplicable

possession of a number of slaves, only reproves it as a mark of unchristian pomp and luxury. By the Apostolic Constitutions, Can. LXXXII. slaves could not be ordained. Slaves of Christian masters were to be exhorted to obedience. Those of Christian masters, when converted, were to bring certificates from their masters, who were also laid under religious obligation to instruct their slaves, and bring them to baptism. See Bingham's Antiq. IV. 4. 2. Compare Grotius, de Jure Bell. III. 7. 9.

l *Servants,* (slaves,) *be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ,* Ephes. vi. 5. Compare Col. iii. 22. Tit. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 18. also Epist. to Philemon.

m Δοῦλος δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ εἷς ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐλεύθεροι πάντες, ἀνθυπουργοῦντες ἀλλήλοις. Καταγινώσκουσί τε τῶν δεσποτῶν, οὐ μόνον ὡς ἀδίκων, ἰσότητα λυμαινομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἀσεβῶν θεσμὸν φύσεως ἀναιρούντων· ἣ πάντας ὁμοίως γεννήσασα καὶ θρέψασα, μητρὸς δίκην, ὡς ἀδελφοὺς γνησίους οὐ λεγομένους, ἀλλ' ὄντας ὄντως ἀπειργάσατο. Philo quod omnis Probus Liber.

part of their character, if considered as without commission or guidance from Heaven. It could not be timidity; for to advance their cause they would confront every peril, and cheerfully surrender themselves to the dungeon, the scourge, and the stake. If it was wisdom, it was incompatible with blind enthusiasm; if it was craft, the same craft would have modified other parts of their conduct, repressed their burning zeal, and shewed them a less difficult and safer way to ease and distinction.

Here then I make my stand, and assert, that men, mad enough to embark without warrant in such an enterprise, would never have conducted it with so much dexterity and prudence. I argue that their disdain of these obvious means of extending their influence, and increasing their sect, implies a confidence in other means of persuasion, concerning which, if they could delude others, they could not delude themselves. The impostor would not have been scrupulous, nor the enthusiast cautious in his choice of means: *It is not lawful to do evil*

that good may come, is too lofty a maxim for a knave, too wise for a fanatic. In all their continued path along the edge of a precipice, they never lose their balance. They are neither intoxicated by success, nor hurried into precipitancy by opposition. But every instance of their prudence, their success itself, makes it more improbable that they should set forth as teachers of a new religion without rational grounds; every proof of sane and sober conduct heightens their value, as credible witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

It is not enough to assert that the prudence of their conduct and the adaptation of their tenets to the mind of man forced their religion upon the world; we must reconcile their prudence with their unwarranted ambition; explain how they came to strike out this new and triumphant system of doctrine. It is not satisfactory to prove that the world was in some degree prepared for their reception, unless we can provide them with adequate means for subduing the hostile array of vices, passions, opinions, prejudices, interests, superstitions, which it

still opposed; and account for their avoiding all dangers and all temptations. What those means were, I am at a loss to conceive, unless the fulfilment of their master's promise: *These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover* [n].

How they attained to that wisdom, of which their success is an irrefragable proof, unless by the constant illumination of the Holy Spirit, I am equally at a loss to conjecture. Exclude the Deity, nothing is explicable, conceivable, or credible; acknowledge *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*, all is at once clear, rational, and satisfactory.

[n] Mark xvi. 17, 18.

LECTURE VIII.

1 Cor. xv. 19.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

EVEN if we could have discovered human causes adequate to the success of the apostles; if we could have made out a plausible case to account for their triumph, when once embarked in the undertaking, it would still be necessary to divine adequate motives, which could have induced them to commence and persevere in their design. I see not one daring and eccentric adventurer set forth on a dazzling though desperate enterprise, but a number of men, suddenly seized with an unmeasured ambition, confederated for a similar object, and proceeding with patient and resolute perseverance towards their end. I see them all sacrificing ease, comfort, useful occupa-

tions, the certainty of subsistence, even their domestic ties, some indeed more splendid prospects, to become itinerant teachers, inured to hardships, literally *taking no thought for the morrow*, committing themselves to the care and to the uncertain support of strangers. I see them set forth, unless by divine inspiration, or by assiduous labour, ignorant, or imperfectly acquainted with the languages of those whom they are to address. I see them set forth, if blind to some of these difficulties, yet with these difficulties confronting them on the threshold of their undertaking, and multiplying on all sides as they advance. Not one, as far as we can ascertain, recedes; no false, no irresolute, no perverse, no weary and dissatisfied brother is estranged or alienated. Their Master had selected twelve, and *one of them was a devil;* but Judas is the only traitor; the memory of Jesus is of geater authority than his personal presence. While great and apparently uncontemplated innovations take place in the design, while old prejudices are violently called into action, while differences of opinion and direct op-

position occur, there is no long or irreconcilable schism in the apostolic body. Their task appears to cease only with their lives; having achieved victory to a certain point, they are not content to repose upon their trophies and enjoy either the well-earned relaxation or the pride of success. In incessant activity they press onward; their dangers by no means decrease, nor do their toils lighten. Their life is thus described by one of their body, addressing those who must have been so intimately acquainted with his history and his usual mode of living, as to detect any falsehood, and refuse credit to any heightened or exaggerated statement: *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness*[a]. All this is voluntarily braved,

[a] 2 Cor. xi. 26, 27.

and undergone without hope of cessation, or rather with an acknowledged certainty of its continuance. But I see all this intrepidity and endurance united with moderation, common sense, and reasonableness; no extravagance, no paroxysms of bodily emotion, no Bacchic fury, no prophetic agitation, no self-inflicted tortures, no flagellations, no intoxication of the mind by the high-wrought anguish of the body. They affect no philosophic contempt of pain, they do not deny it to be an evil. They calmly estimate their present sufferings against their future reward; *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*[b]: they are fully alive to the wretchedness of their situation; *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*: they are not actuated by the desperate conviction that they have offended beyond all hope of impunity: it is in their power at any instant to retract or recede; *If the dead rise not at all, why stand*

b 2 Cor. iv. 17.

we in jeopardy every hour? I see them, while thus the victims of persecution, extorting the admission of their purity and blamelessness from their most inveterate enemies. I see them converting thousands, yet preserving their humility, as superior to the pride of success as to the despondency of partial failure. Finally, I see them, if all not actually submitting to martyrdom, proclaiming aloud that they should consider it gain to die for Christ; and perpetually in situations where their escape is far more improbable than their death. Nevertheless, they do not with blind and obstinate zeal wantonly and unnecessarily provoke the anger of their persecutors; they do not decline any prudent or lawful means of extricating themselves from their dangers, nor with the rash and unwarrantable insolence of some among the later martyrs, do they irritate those who have the power of life and death. Having seen all this, to the extreme extent of my information, I search the annals of mankind for precedent, to the utmost limits of my philosophy, I investigate the human mind to discover any

possible actuating principle for such conduct.

I. In history I observe many cases in some respects analogous, none similar; apparent precedents, which however, on closer examination, turn out to be totally opposite and contradictory.

If I look to the religious revolution brought about by the apostles, I find men in different ages, like Zoroaster, Confucius, Budh, Numa, Mango Capac, who either by the superiority of their natural talents, or by pretended intercourse with the divinity, have wrought great and beneficial changes in the moral and religious condition of their countrymen. But these are either in obscure or barbarous periods, or among nations but imperfectly civilized. I have no authentic records to inform me of the causes of their success, but still I have no difficulty in accounting for it. Whether these men assumed the character of delegates from heaven, for the purpose of thus establishing more firmly their useful institutions, or the blind admiration and gratitude of their age forced it upon them, the darkness of

the period, and the ignorance of the people among whom they respectively lived, justify me in attributing their success to causes purely natural. They were obviously men far superior to their age, and if by their mental preeminence, their virtue, knowledge, or wisdom, they shall have succeeded in obtaining love and reverence, adoration, or even deification, would naturally follow. But Christianity appears at a period of the world when civilization was far advanced. In this case it is the inferior in knowledge, letters, the useful arts, in every thing in short, except in the mysteries of their religion, which converts the enlightened, the philosophic, the instructed part of the community. It is the barbarian teaching the civilized world; the odious and despised extorting submission from those who were in universal honour and estimation; the *offscouring* of the world bringing the world into subjection.

If, on the other hand, I look to the improbability of the attempt, and the voluntary sufferings to which the apostles exposed themselves, I must acknowledge

that I find the intensity of their afflictions surpassed, and apparently from motives as unaccountable. But still there is the widest difference between the analogous cases and that of the primitive teachers of Christianity; every where else we find some common principle of our nature at work; some exciting passion adequate to the effect produced. I see, for instance, men for an uncertain and indefinite reward enduring privations and hardships, at least equal in duration and severity. The common soldier might often render up as full and dreadful an account of his sufferings. And, reasoning *a priori*, nothing can appear more extravagant and unnatural, than that multitudes of human beings should submit, at the discretion and for the advantage of a few, to be shot, spiked, mangled, mutilated, starved, parched, frozen, massacred by ranks and squadrons. But we know that military glory, the spirit of emulation and adventure, the love of plunder, the exemption from the common toils of industry, have at every period of human history, and in every state of human society stimulated men to this mode of life:

even on the most forlorn hope, there is still a chance of escape, the possibility of distinction and reward, above all, the animating excitement of rivalry, and the dread of shame and contempt. I read of men enduring, defying, and provoking the most excruciating bodily anguish. The North American Indian laughs, while his skin is half torn off by his relentless enemies: but to this spirit he has been schooled from his earliest infancy, inured by example, strung by emulation, and taught to consider it as the height of personal or national pride. The Roman was in the habit of seeing the gladiator daily endure agony equal to that of the Christian martyr, upon whose serene patience he thus learned to look with less surprise or admiration. He had seen the hired slave after hours of agonizing torture, without a shudder, and with a smile of triumph, receive the sword in his entrails. But no recantation was offered to the gladiator, he either died animated by the plaudits of the theatre, or was glad to escape from a life of disgraceful exhibition and reiterated misery. The Christian almost at any time

might suspend his sufferings, or save his life, by a word or even a sign of submission; his fortitude was animated by no applause, for his sufferings were beheld with aversion or contempt; he had no reason to be eager to shake off a wretched life, for it was his Christianity alone which stood in the way of his return to peace, to respect, or whatever worldly advantages his circumstances might afford. The self-inflicted sufferings of the Faquir in India, and of the Stylites and other Christian fanatics of the fifth and sixth centuries, far transcend the most acute anguish which the apostles could have endured. Every sect, I might also say, every religion, can produce its martyrs. The renunciation of life, the endurance of ignominious and painful death, appears in every page at least of Christian history. If in the present day religious enthusiasm does not cast its victims to the beasts in the arena, or hang them up naked to the fiery pincers or melted lead of the torturer, yet it exposes them to the long, or even perpetual exile, the slow and malignant fever of pestilential climates, famine, and destitution: yet men

are not wanting, who cheerfully undergo every privation and hardship, abandon their country, sacrifice their lives in the same cause, and with the same zeal as the apostles. But here likewise the points of difference are obvious. The Faquir and the no less barbarous Christian were repaid by the admiration and reverence of multitudes. Either as impostors or fanatics, their conduct is intelligible; they act upon acknowledged principles. The hereditary creed of one, if he be in earnest, informs him that so much present pain is worth so much future bliss. The monkish self-tormentor was encircled by those who taught, and those who testified by their applauses their belief, that the pains of hell, or purgatory, were to be commuted for misery in the flesh. It is possible, though far be it from me, especially in this place, to question, that the grace of the Holy Ghost breathed peace and resignation into the dying hearts of Cranmer and Latimer; far be it from me to depreciate the conscientious sincerity of those who may have taken up their cross in distant regions for a less apostolic faith; but, arguing with

the infidel, I could not deny the possibility that these men might be enthusiasts, inflamed by the desire of emulating the primitive apostles, in admiration of whose characters they had been educated; the fervour, the saintliness, the humility, the resignation of whose precepts may so have kindled their imagination, as to induce them to suppose themselves under the inspiration, or especial protection, of divine Providence. For we must recollect that the apostles not only walked by faith, but by sight also. Faith *in things unseen* may have deluded more recent martyrs; but Peter and James and Paul exposed themselves to death, as witnesses of what they had seen and heard, and of facts which came under the unerring cognizance of their senses[c]. The modern missionary is as imperfect an antitype of the apostles; he goes forth, with all the sincere believers in his religion, imploring the blessings of Hea-

[c] *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.* 1 John i. 1.

ven on his undertaking. Those with whom the warmth of his zeal has associated him in his native country, if they deplore his loss, yet honour his motives. My mind naturally turns to one, well known in this place, who made a cheerful sacrifice of the highest hopes of distinction; and if he set forth with the dignity of a Christian bishop, yet with the humble heart of the meanest missionary. Yet he, as all others, must have known, what great things God had done for his Christian people. He was the apostle of a tried and established faith, his was no unprecedented experiment. He was a witness to the beneficial effects of Christianity on the social and moral character of men, and might think it his deliberate duty to look on all mankind as one brotherhood, and to communicate the blessings of his faith, to the utmost extent in his power. But the apostles went forth without proof or experience of the power of their religion, without precedent or example; they went out, pursued by the obloquy or hatred of their countrymen, to convert strangers, with whom they had neither part nor lot, whom their education had

taught them to consider unclean, and with whom it had prohibited all communication as a crime. As little can we compare with that of the apostles the attempt or the success of those men, who from time to time, either as unwarranted innovators, or as holy reformers, have kindled the dormant religious enthusiasm of the Christian world. Montanus and Manes, St. Bernard and St. Francis, Arnold of Brescia, and Savonarola, Huss and Jerome of Prague, Wickliffe and Luther, down to John Fox and Wesley, have converted thousands to their peculiar opinions, and in many instances imparted a resolute and persevering zeal not inferior to that of the early Christians. But it is one thing to renew an established, another to establish a new religion. In the former case, the religious feeling, instead of being preoccupied, is predisposed in favour of the zealous innovator. To fertilize an unproductive field, of which the tillage has been neglected, and to clear a jungle in which the thick and obstinate roots have been for ages incorporated with the soil, and make it produce a vigorous and healthful harvest,

requires a different process. The apostles, it has been well observed, "raised Christianity out of nothing, and against every "thing[d]."—The enthusiasm, which these men imparted to their followers, *might* have been of the same character with that of subsequent Christian zealots; their own must have been either downright phrensy or divine inspiration. I have no scruple then in concluding, that there is no well authenticated record in history of a number of men, thus unanimously exposing themselves to privations, hardships, and death, in testimony to facts of which they had the demonstrative evidence of their senses; and thus in defiance of every prevailing opinion, passion, and prepossession of mankind, establishing a new, influential, and permanent religion.

Having failed then in my search after a precedent for the conduct of the primitive apostles, I attempt to ascertain whether any one, or any complication of human motives will account for their undertaking, or carrying through such an enterprise. I

[d] By Mr. Sumner, in his Evidences.

deny not the difficulty, I had almost said, the impossibility of reconciling, with any general system, the infinite variety of feelings, affections, and desires, the indefinable and contradictory impulses of the will, which excite and neutralize, modify and counterbalance each other. I will admit that the eccentricity of individual character defies alike the prescience of the most sagacious to anticipate, and the acuteness of the most subtle to trace its aberrations. But a body must be actuated by common principles, a complicated machine work by general rules. Survey then the passions of mankind; select those which could have sent forth designing or ardent men to convert the world to a new religion. Begin with the desire of gain. The apostles commence with the possession, or at least the direction of a charitable fund; the control of this they abandon immediately, and of their own accord. They proclaim their right of maintenance by those whom they teach, in practice they renounce this right[e].

[e] See 1 Cor. x. 13, 18. 2 Cor. xi. 9. xii. 13. Philipp. iv. 11, 17. 1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8.

They perpetually defy any charge of covetousness [f]; a subject which they would at least have been prudent enough to avoid, if their consciences had not been clear. While acting and speaking as delegates of Heaven, they continue to exercise their mechanical craft; they *labour, working with their own hands* [g]. He who almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian, and who argued in the Areopagus, returns to his humble vocation, and joins himself with Aquila and Priscilla, to gain his bread by tent-making [h]. There is good reason for believing, that the embracing Christianity rendered every convert liable to the forfeiture of all his property, a penalty attached to excommunication from the synagogue [i]. The Jews moreover had apostles, whose situations, although only agents to the high priests, could scarcely be other-

[f] See 1 Thess. ii. 5. compare 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. 2 Pet. ii. 3. but particularly Acts xx. 33, 34.

[g] 1 Cor. iv. 12.

[h] See Acts xviii. 3.

[i] Those that were cast out of the church they deprived of their goods, according to Ezra, vi. 8. *Lightfoot on John* xvi. 2.

wise than lucrative[k]. They called by that name those who collected from all quarters the funds for the maintenance of the temple, which were so ample, as to excite the jealousy of Roman financiers[l]. Paul, as one of these agents, and who, as persecutor of the Christians, would have been considered to have deserved the office better, would have had the management of a fund, to which all the charitable donations of the whole Christian body must have been comparatively insignificant. But poor the apostles set forth, poor they lived, and poor

[k] Habebant etiam (sc. Judæi) שליחי עבור vel קהל ἀποστόλους τῆς ἐκκλησίας, *nuncios cœtus*, qui mandata deferrent ad synagogas, vel pecunias a synagogis Hierosolymam, vel victimas et decimas ad sacerdotes; maxime qui δίδραχμον, semisiclum tributum, quotannis ex lege in sacrarium deferendum exigerent. *Herm. Witsius. Melet. Leidens.* p. 31.

—ἀπαρχὰς δὲ ἐτησίους εἰσφερόντων, ἐξ ὧν ἀνάγουσι θυσίας, στέλλοντες ἱεροπομποὺς εἰς τὸ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἱερόν. Philo de Legat. p. 593. edit. Mangey.

[l] Cum aurum, Judæorum nomine, quotannis ex Italia, et ex omnibus provinciis Hierosolyma exportari soleret, Flaccus sanxit edicto, ne ex Asia exportari liceret. *Cic. pro Flac.* XXVIII. Pessimus quisque, spretis religionibus patriis, tributa et stipes illuc congerebant; unde auctæ Judæorum res. *Tac. Hist.* V. 4.

they died; and, if actuated by interested views, no men surely so completely counteracted their own object, by the precepts which they inculcated, and the life to which, outwardly at least, they pledged themselves by the very first principles of their faith.

It would be trifling to estimate the possibility of their being actuated by a desire of ease and indulgence, men against whom their most rancorous opponents never advanced the slightest charge of sloth or moral delinquency. But we may find perhaps a higher and more probable motive in the desire of authority. Nothing is more captivating to the human mind than conscious superiority over our fellow-creatures. Whether enslaving the passions, and directing the will of a crowded popular assembly by eloquence; whether influencing the civil or municipal affairs of a nation or district, by acknowledged sagacity in counsel; whether from deference to our wealth, authority, or good sense, men's opinions take their colour from ours, the mere sensation of power is its own reward. However obtained,

on a wide or narrow scale, by base or noble means; be our self-importance flattered by the submission of the wise, or the unreasoning assent of the vulgar, the love of domination is not fastidious; if it cannot attain to the more valuable homage, it will content itself with the humblest gratification. The commonest impostor feels a vulgar pride in deluding the gaping multitude, whose credulity, if they are once persuaded of his preternatural power, always keeps pace with, often oversteps the fertility of the impostor's invention. How much greater then and loftier the gratification of presiding over a moral people, and being looked up to by those, who, however in general undistinguished by rank or situation, by their exemplary virtues, commanded the respect, or at least repelled the obloquy of their bitterest antagonists. But the love of authority can rarely restrain itself within bounds; it is invariably dictatorial, captious as to minute points of obedience, jealous of any infringement upon its enactments. The apostles in their writings assume no lofty or imperious tone, they exact no homage,

they demand no personal reverence. Every subsequent exaggeration of the priestly character, every usurpation on the undelegated rights of Heaven, every encroachment on the uncommunicated office of the great Judge of all flesh, is the strongest testimony to the moderation of the apostles; and such moderation is absolutely incompatible with the influence of this inquisitorial and despotic feeling, which endures no emancipation from its bonds, and resents the slightest resistance to its control, as an insult upon Heaven. Had authority been their motive, in such hands such authority must have been abused. At all events, it would have been the prominent and the perpetual object of their writings, to assert and vindicate this, which at present appears so doubtful and indefinite

Let us turn to the desire of posthumous celebrity "The assuring of a lasting "reputation upon earth, a motive so conge- "nial to the vanity of human nature, often "served to animate the courage of the mar- "tyr." Thus Gibbon. And after the successful establishment of Christianity, when

a numerous body enshrined in their recollection, embalmed in their hymns, sanctified the relics, visited the sepulchre of the departed Christian, this feeling might, and unquestionably did excite the indiscreet, I had almost said, unchristian ardour of those who wantonly provoked the persecutor to the crime of judicial murder, in order that they might secure the palm-crown of the martyr. But when Christianity could scarcely be said to exist, when it had as yet no single record, when there was every human probability that it could not last a century, the mind must indeed have been ardent, which could anticipate an immortality of fame from being the victim of some desultory fray between two parties of Jews in some obscure city, or from being cast, one of a gladiatorial hecatomb, to the beasts of the arena. I cannot indeed but be awe-struck at the erring calculations of human ambition. The fate of the early Christians, and their more distinguished cotemporaries, preaches a forcible admonition on the uncertainty with which after-ages award their admiration, and disappoint

the high-raised expectations of the most celebrated in their own day. Doubtless, when Christianity first appeared, those who considered that their names would be perpetuated, and demand the homage of future generations, were the consuls, the patriots, the favourites, the philosophers, the poets of Rome. The Suetonii and Agricolas who had earned glory, immortal as it was esteemed, by subduing the Parthian, or civilizing the Briton. The Helvidii and Thraseas, who kept alive the spirit of the old Roman republic; which, if it could not enable them to live with dignity, taught them to die with intrepidity. The Tigellini and Sejani, whose celebrity, if less honourable, would live in the lasting execration of mankind, arraigned before the bar of posterity by the sententious sarcasm of the historian, or the sublime moral indignation of the satirist. The Senecas and Lucans, who had enriched with their wisdom, and ennobled with their stately verse, the declining days of Roman literature. Among these, as they led the triumph to the Capitol, or toiled through crowding sycophants,

were seen stealing about with cautious timidity, lest they should provoke the contemptuous spurn, some poor men of the most despicable race upon earth, dragged perhaps to prison, without exciting the commiseration, or even the notice of the multitude. Yet of the former, how large a portion of the world is entirely ignorant; while the names of Peter and Paul are spoken with signs of the profoundest reverence in regions, rather I would say in worlds, unknown to Rome; hallow the most splendid edifices, and even cities; while their writings are multiplied into countless languages, and received as the authoritative moral laws of innumerable people. Little did Gallio think, when the destitute and friendless Paul stood before his throne, that the brother of Seneca[m], and the object of the panegyric of Statius[n], would be chiefly

[m] Solebam tibi dicere, Gallionem fratrem meum (quem nemo non parum amat; etiam qui amare plus non potest) alia vitia non nosse, hoc etiam odisse. Nemo enim mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quam hic omnibus. *Senec. Præf. ad Nat. Quæst.* Compare Dio Cass. lib. LX.

[n] Hoc plusquam Senecam dedisse mundo
Et dulcem generasse Gallionem. *Stat. Sylv.* II. 7.

known to posterity, as connected with the history of that disregarded criminal, whose cause appeared beneath his cognizance.

To return from this digression. In the apostolic days, of all desires that of posthumous fame must have been the most groundless and inconceivable. Indeed these two latter motives are only different modifications of ambition; but to the predominance of this motive, under any form, there is another insuperable objection. I mean their total sacrifice of their own celebrity to that of their Master, and the manner in which they sink every personal consideration. *God forbid*, is their continual language, *that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ.* Ambitious men! whose ambition made them submit to every sacrifice, endure every toil, confront every danger, yet the height of whose glory was to be considered faithful servants. *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* Was this ostentatious humility? The title of the *servant of the servants of God* has been abused by the rankest pride of the human heart, and pre-

faced the anathema, which was to shake kings from their thrones. But with the apostles it was accompanied with every sign of the most profound and sincere abasement of heart, and the subordination of every thought, word, and action, to the single purpose of advancing their Master's glory. I aim at no paradox; but when by their miraculous, or apparently miraculous powers, Paul and Barnabas had extorted divine honours from the mistaken barbarians, if they had humoured the deception, and received the offered homage, they might have found precedents in the heathen annals for such conduct. They degrade themselves at once to the level of those that worship them, *We are men of like passions with yourselves;* they renounce with devout horror every sign of personal respect; in this, as in all instances, they are as inferior to the intoxication of pride, as to that of power. Reconcile this unaffected modesty, this uniform self-depression, this total disregard of personal aggrandizement, the abasing acknowledgements of their own infirmities and sins, with the daring love of distinc-

tion, or any ambitious motive whatever, which could induce the apostles to travel through the world, announcing themselves the appointed ministers of the crucified Jesus.

Thus we are equally baffled in our search for precedent, and in our endeavour to trace a possible human motive for the conduct of the apostles. The question then comes to this; Did they believe, or did they not believe? If they did not believe, what was their object? what induced them to rush on such dangers, to persevere through such trials, to confront such difficulties, with which, even if they did not foresee them, they must immediately have become acquainted by bitter experience? Why did they live and die, for no end, but that of establishing a new religion, of which all the

o Ὅταν δὲ Παῦλον ἴδῃς οὐκ εἰδότα αὐτὸν, τὸν οὐκ ἀκούσαντα αὐτοῦ, τὸν οὐ μετασχόντα τῆς διδασκαλίας, τὸν καὶ μετὰ τὸν σταυρὸν, αὐτῷ πολεμοῦντα, τὸν ἀποκτιννύντα τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας, τὸν πάντα συγχέοντα καὶ ταράττοντα, τοῦτον ἐξαίφνης μεταβεβλημένον, καὶ τοῖς ὑπὲρ τοῦ κηρύγματος καμάτοις παρελάσαντα τοὺς τοῦ Χριστοῦ φίλους, ποίαν ἕξεις λοιπὸν, εἰπέ μοι, ἀναισχυντίας πρόφασιν, ἀπιστῶν τῷ τῆς ἀναστάσεως λόγῳ; Chrys. Hom. Ὅτι Σαῦλος ἔτι ἐμπνέων.

honour redounded to another, to whom Paul at least was absolutely a stranger, bound by no tie of recollection, by no kindly feeling or familiar intercourse. But, secondly, if they did not believe their own doctrines, did they likewise disbelieve the first principles of natural religion, or those of the law in which they had been educated? If they believed not Christ, they were impious in proclaiming his Atonement, his Redemption, his Messiahship. The most ambiguous expression, which asserted his equality with the Father, the most remote allusion to his Godhead, was an offence not less heinous than the deification of the most worthless idol, or the most frantic orgies of paganism. There is no alternative; they believed or they blasphemed [p]. Every day they provoked the thunders of the God of heaven, whose name and authority they usurped. They were liars at the time that they appealed to the God of truth. While they were preaching, and in their general conduct practising the most profound humility, all

[p] Compare Houteville, Religion prouvée par les Faits.

this was the rankest hypocrisy; for they were displaying in fact the most awful presumption. They assumed the sovereign prerogative of the divinity over life and death. What was Peter's speech, when Ananias was struck dead; *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* If unauthorized by the inspiration of Heaven, could daring impiety imagine a more dreadful profanation? Had they, I will not say faith, but the slightest apprehension of the possible truth of their own religion? What was the crime of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, or that of Nadab and Abihu, to theirs, who were thus adding a new law to that which was delivered in thunder on Sinai? Had they cast off with inconceivable intrepidity, when they would impose Jesus upon the world as the Christ, not merely the principles of faith, but every superstitious terror likewise, in which they had been nursed? Had they (men of that class and character, on whom the religious terrors of popular belief usually retain the strongest hold) entirely expelled from their hearts the deep-rooted confidence of their countrymen, that the Mes-

siah was now at hand? Must not the inevitable consideration have occurred, that while they were thus daringly deluding, the real Messiah might appear in all his prophesied terrors. And, if he should find his place preoccupied by bold and designing men, who were converting the promise of his coming into a source of personal advantage or distinction! If they could for an instant have supposed the possibility, that while they were expounding Isaiah in favour of their crucified Master, their better instructed countrymen might after all be more correct, in speaking of him as literally *coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah*, and *treading the wine-press of his wrath alone!* If he should *suddenly come to his temple*, and find his sanctuary defiled by the admission of the unclean heathen to the promised privileges of his redemption! If he should come, not merely as the Deliverer of his people, but the avenger of all blasphemous infringements on the law! If even in the gloom of the dungeon, or the despondency of some severe affliction, doubt and apprehension should sug-

gest that this were still possible, how could they avoid or confront, if it should occur, this awful supposition? Add to this, that they walked on the brink of eternity. Every instant they were in danger of being hurried out of the world. And whither? Into annihilation or a future state. Into the former? But what reward would they find there for their labours? what consolation for their self-sought afflictions? what compensation for their shortened existence? was it there that they were to prove that *to die for Christ is gain?* Into a future state? Then either before the tribunal of the great God of nature, whose name and authority they usurped, or the God of their fathers, whose predestined purposes they had presumed to accomplish according to their own will, and for their own advantage. Nor is this yet all. These very men, these impious, these presumptuous blasphemers, teach a religion of the most exquisite humility, the most noble self-denial, the most lovely holiness. They first make those discoveries in moral science which are recognized as true by the heart of man:

they degrade into vices the heathen virtues of pride and revenge; and exalt in their stead meekness, patience. forgiveness of injuries, the duty of suffering for our fellow-creatures: they bring down, if I may so speak, divine charity from heaven. They draw, in short, the character of their Master in a light so amiable, they display so admirable an impersonation of the Deity of love and mercy, that the world is awed, and the more the heart of man is improved and enlightened, the greater the love and adoration of *God manifest in the flesh* through Christ Jesus.

Now take the converse; they believed, but were deluded into their belief. What all? on matters of plain fact, which came directly under their senses? False miracles might impose upon the people, they could not upon those who wrought them. Could the imagination of many men be so heated at once, as to suppose that they saw, and conversed, and eat with a well-known person, who had never appeared among them? They believed that they could speak various languages of which they had not

learnt a word? They believed that they commanded cripples to walk and were obeyed? That they proclaimed men under the wrath of God, who obsequiously conformed to their wishes, and fell dead before them? Paul believed that he was struck to the earth at noon-day, and heard a distinct and articulate voice, when nothing of the kind had taken place. If they were not liars, were they thus infatuated, and deprived of their senses, men who at the same time could argue seriously, and conduct themselves rationally? For there appears this remarkable difference between the miracles of the apostles and those of our Lord. Except when wrought on inanimate objects, as on the sea which supported him, the water changed into wine, or the fig-tree that withered at his command, Jesus usually required faith as a preliminary to his gracious intervention. The wonderful works of the apostles were frequently wrought on those who, like the cripple, had no previous warning, and could not have expected a similar blessing: on Paul, who was in a state most opposite to

confidence in the power of Jesus: on Ananias and Sapphira, and Elymas, who could have had no apprehension whatever of their miraculous punishment. If the apostles could persuade themselves to believe their own miraculous powers, how did they persuade their antagonists, or persons at least indifferent, to favour their delusion, and maintain them in their continued state of hallucination and error? Thus then it is equally impossible, that, without believing their own doctrines, they should have preached them with success, or that they should have believed them on insufficient and unwarrantable evidence. But if they could not be deceivers or deceived, they must be recognized as the authorized and inspired delegates of the almighty God.

We have now led forth the apostles from the obscure chamber in which they were met, traced them in their outset, and on their weary and dangerous pilgrimage; but have found it impossible to urge them onward one step, to conceive their advancing, either in Jerusalem or Judæa, far less to *the ends of the earth*, unless accompa-

nied by signs and wonders. We cannot separate, we cannot tear asunder the miracles from the narrative. That Christianity could not have existed without them, supposing the main facts of its history true; and that these main facts are demonstrable, has been fully shewn. No part of their progress, no part of their conduct, no part of their success, is explicable on any other theory. We may be met by general insinuations on the credulity of mankind; but to suppose credulity so great, as for these men to fancy themselves, or persuade others, that they were authorized, inspired, guaranteed in their inspiration by perpetual miracles, if in fact gifted with no such powers, is to invalidate at once all moral demonstration. We have to choose between the assumed improbability, that God should work miracles for the purpose of establishing a merciful and beneficent religion, and the demonstrated impossibility, that, all other means of success, all precedents, and all motives being equally deficient, the apostles should have established Christianity without miracles.

But, O Almighty God, if thou didst indeed commission these men to publish abroad the religion of thy Blessed Son; if thou didst inspire the Gospel, taught by Peter and John and Paul; if thou didst ratify thy inspiration by signs and wonders impossible to less than thy omnipotence, *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will*[q]? But if thy grace enable us to believe and practise the great truths of thy holy scriptures, how cordially and rapturously shall we take up the language of the evangelic prophet, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of* those *that bring good tidings, that publish peace; that bring good tidings of good, that publish salvation; that say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth*[r]! For these were the good tidings which Peter announced,

[q] Hebrews ii. 3, 4.   [r] Isai. lii. 8.

Through the name of Jesus, *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*[s].—*This*, says St. John, *is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*[t]. Finally, St. Paul has declared, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*—And may we remember, that it is the language of our blessed Lord himself, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*[u]; and, *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him*[x].

[s] Acts x. 43. [t] 1 John ii. 25.
[u] John xiv. 15. [x] John xiv. 21.

THE END.